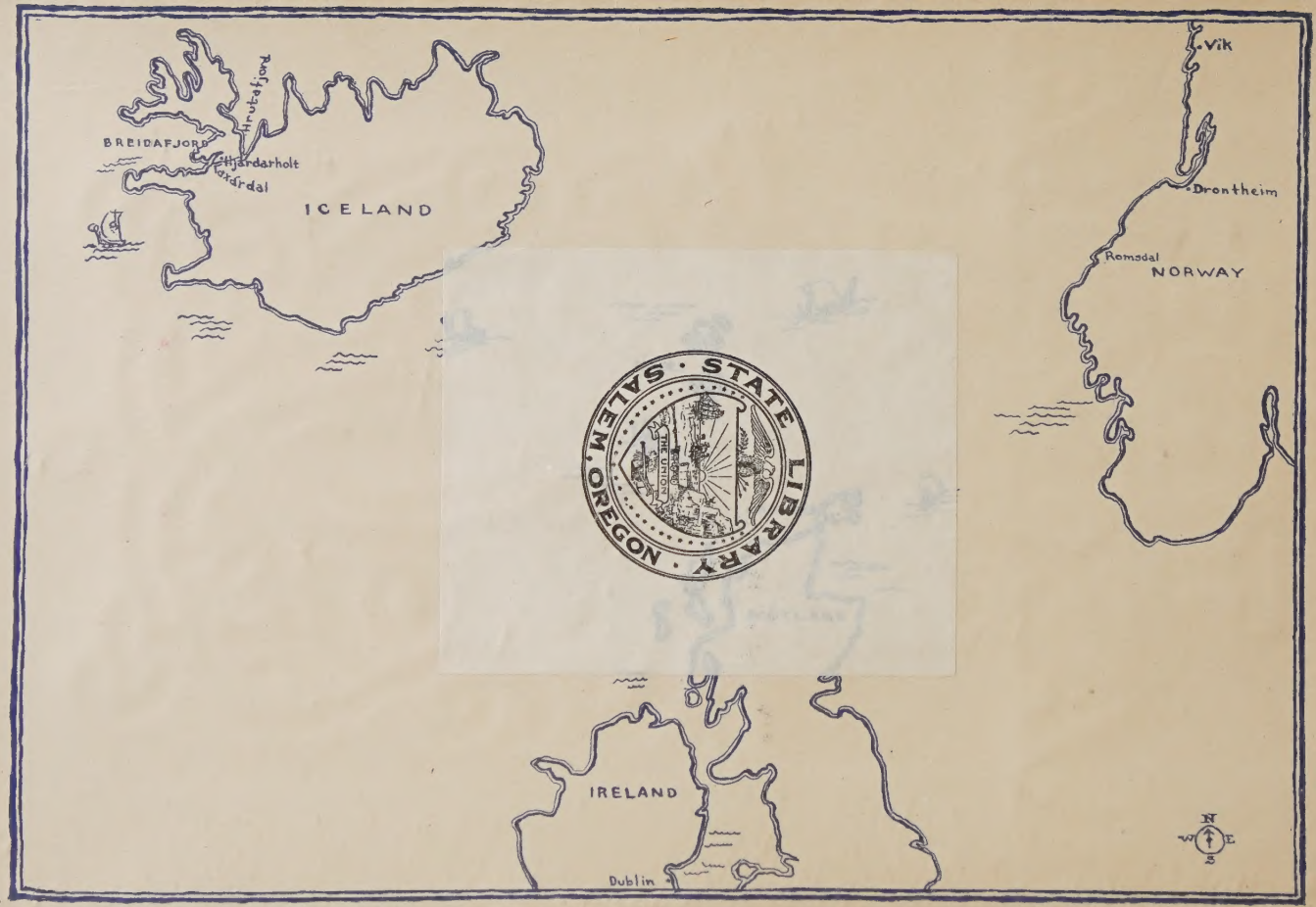
THE LAXDÆLA SAGA



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THE LAXDÆLA SAGA

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THE LAXDÆLA SAGA

Translated from the Icelandic

With an Introduction

by THORSTEIN VEBLEN

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Introduction

It has been something of a convention among those who interest themselves in Icelandic literature to speak well of the Laxdæla Saga as a thing of poetic beauty and of high literary merit. So, characteristically and with the weight of authority, Gudbrand Vigfusson has this to say of the Laxdæla, in the Prolegomena to his edition of the *Sturlunga Saga:* "This, the second only in size of the Icelandic Sagas, is perhaps also the second in beauty. It is the most romantic of all, full of pathetic sentiment, which, like that of Euripides, is almost modern, and brings it closer to the thoughts and feelings of our day than any other story of Icelandic life."

Further, as regards the tale which it has to tell: "Besides the customary but always interesting introduction, the story falls into two parts. First the early love of Kjartan and Gudrun, the hero and heroine, and the poet's career in Norway. The second part goes on with the story after Kjartan's return to Iceland, relating his death at his rival Bolli's hand, Bolli's death no long while after, and the vengeance taken for both."

As in other sagas whose incidents date from the same period (tenth and early eleventh centuries) so also in the Laxdæla, it is the paramount exigencies of the blood-feud that shape the outlines of the narrative and create the critical situations of the plot and give rise to the main outstanding incidents and episodes. Such are the classic sagas which have come down from the saga period. The

blood-feud was then a matter of course and of common sense, about the merits of which no question was entertained—no more than the merits of national patriotism are questioned in our time. It is only in late and spurious tales, dating from after the infiltration of the mediæval chivalric romances into the Scandinavian countries, that other interests or principles of conduct have come to supplant the blood-feud as the finally dominant note. And in its class, doubtless, the Laxdæla rightly takes rank among the foremost, as a tragic tale of intrigue and adventure driven by the imperative call of the blood-feud. Other factors and motives come into the tale, in some profusion indeed, and they find adequate expression, but this is what may be called the axis of its structure.

But all the while the Laxdæla remains also an ethnological document of a high order; perhaps standing in this respect at the head of the list. So that it is of prime significance for any understanding of that peculiar phase of culture that makes up its setting; that is to say the period which comprises the close of the Viking Age, so called, and the advent of the Christian Faith in Iceland and in northern Europe more at large. More intimately and more naïvely than any other, this saga reflects the homely conditions of workday life in its time, together with the range of commonplace sentiments and convictions which animated this workday life. So that it is fairly to be taken as a competent though perhaps accentuated record of late-Pagan and early-Christian manners, customs, convictions and ideals among the Germanic peoples at large, but more particularly touching the Scandinavian and the English-speaking peoples at the point of their induction into their feudal and ecclesiastical status in early-Christian times.

By force of what may be called historical accident the Scandinavian peoples, and the Icelandic community in

particular, underwent the conversion to mediævalism, civil and religious, at a relatively late date and with a relatively swift transition; so late that it falls wholly within the scope of recorded history, and so late also that it comes at a time when the feudal system of civil life as well as the feudalistic Church had already attained their majority, had reached maturity and finished certitude as an intrinsic order of things, or perhaps had even entered on an incipient stage of decay.

These peoples came somewhat abruptly out of a footloose paganism which comprised neither Church nor State, properly speaking; neither feudalism nor ecclesiasticism. Both in the secular and in the spiritual respect their paganism was already infirm and insecure. And they fell somewhat precipitately and uncritically into the coils of the new Faith and that new status of servile allegiance that made up the universal bond of mediæval society, civil and ecclesiastical. Both of these institutional innovations alike rested their case on an assumed congenital unworthiness of the common man; the two pillars of the new institutional edifice being Sin and Servility. And both of these concepts are in principle alien to the spirit of the pagan past. The sagas of the classical period reflect that state of experience, spiritual and temporal, which prepared the way for these new canons of right and honest living; canons according to which the common man has in the nature of things no claims which his God or his masters are bound to respect. They are at the same time the canons which have since then continued to rule the life of these Christian peoples in Church and State.

The conversion of these peoples to the ritual and superstitions of the new Faith was swift, facile, thorough and comprehensive, both in the temporal and in the spiritual phase of it, but more notably so in the latter respect. Indeed the gospel of Sin and Redemption was accepted by them with such alacrity and abandon as

would argue that they had already been bent into a suitable frame of mind by protracted and exacting experience of a suitable kind. And on the side of the temporal reorganization, as concerned the revolutionary change in their civil institutions, they made the transition in only less headlong fashion. And in both respects the submission of these peoples to this new order of allegiance was notably abject.

This new gospel of abnegation, spiritual and temporal, was substantially alien to the more ancient principles of that pagan dispensation out of which the North-European peoples had come; but the event goes to show that in principle the new gospel of abnegation was consonant with their later acquired habits of thought; that their more recent experience of life had induced in these peoples such a frame of mind as would incline them to a conviction of sin and an unquestioning subjection to mastery. The discipline of life in the Viking Age appears to have been greatly conducive to such an outcome. And the Laxdæla reflects that state of society and that prevalent frame of mind which led the Scandinavian peoples over from the Viking Age to the Mediæval Church and State.

Here it is necessary to note that while the Viking Age prepared the ground for the Christian Faith and the Feudal State, there were at the same time also certain institutional hold-overs carried over out of remoter pagan antiquity into the Christian Era; hold-overs which also had their part in the new dispensation. Chief among these was the blood-feud; which appears to have suffered no impairment under the conditions of life in the Viking Age. At the same time it appears that in principle, and indeed in the concrete details of its working-out, the habits of thought which underlie the blood-feud were not obnoxious to the interests of Holy Church or to the Propaganda of the Faith. Familiarity with its underlying principles and its logic would rather appear to have facilitated conversion

to the fundamentals of the new Faith. The logic of the blood-feud, with its standardized routine of outlawry and its compounding of felonies, lends itself without substantial change of terms to the preachment of Sin and Redemption; perhaps in an especially happy degree to the preachment of Vicarious Atonement. So that this ancient and ingrained familiarity with the logic of the blood-feud may even be said to have served as an instrument of Grace. And as might fairly have been expected, the institution continued in good vigor for some centuries after the conversion to Christianity. In a certain sense, at least permissively, it even enjoyed the benefit of clergy; and it eventually fell into decay under the impact of secular rather than religious exigencies.

The Viking Age had prepared the ground for the new Faith and for the new, feudal order of Society. The Viking Age had run for some five or six centuries, and the discipline of habituation which was brought to bear through these centuries by that peculiar institution which has given its name to that era was exacting and consistent in an exemplary degree; rising steadily in point of stress and legitimation through the greater part of the period; until, in the end, the depleted resources of the Viking enterprise were taken over by the feudal State and the ecclesiastical establishment, and its pirate captains were supplanted by the princes and prelates of the new dispensation.

That occupation which gave its name and its character to the Viking Age was an enterprise in piracy and slave-trade, which grew steadily more businesslike and more implacable as time went on. It was an enterprise in getting something for nothing by force and fraud at the cost of the party of the second part; much the same, in principle, as the national politics pursued by the statesmen of the present time.

Unavoidably though doubtless unintentionally this busi-

ness quite consistently yielded a cumulative net average deficit at large and resulted in a cumulative privation and servility on the part of the underlying population. Increasingly as time passed, the ethics of the strong arm came to prevail among these peoples and to dominate men's ideals and convictions of right and wrong. Insecurity of life and livelihood grew gradually more pronounced and more habitual, until in the course of centuries of rapine, homicide and desolation it became a settled matter of course and of common sense that the underlying population had no rights which the captains of the strong arm were bound to respect. And like any other business enterprise that is of a competitive nature this traffic in piracy was forever driven by its quest of profits to "trade on a thinner equity," to draw more unsparingly on its resources of man-power and appliances, and so cut into the margin of its reserves, to charge increasingly more than the traffic would bear. Until, between increasing squalor and privation on the material side and an ever increasing habituation to insecurity, fear and servility on the spiritual side, this population was in a frame of mind to believe that this world is a vale of tears and that they all were miserable sinners prostrate and naked in the presence of an unreasoning and unsparing God and his bailiffs. So this standardized routine of larceny and homicide ran through its available resources and fell insensibly into decay, and the State and Holy Church came in and took over the usufruct of the human residue that was left. It is the inchoate phase of this taking-over, specifically as it is to be seen in Iceland, that is reflected in the Laxdæla.

The subsequent share of Holy Church and its clerics in the ulterior degradation of the Scandinavian peoples, including Iceland, was something incredibly shameful and shabby; and the share which the State had in that unholy job was scarcely less so. But these things come into the case of the Icelandic community only at a

later date, and can not be pursued here. The mediæval Church in Iceland stands out on the current of events as a corporation of bigoted adventurers for the capitalizing of graft and blackmail and the profitable compounding of felonious crimes and vices. It is of course not intended to question that this mediæval Church all this while remained a faithful daughter of Rome and doubtless holy as usual; nor is it to be questioned that more genial traits and more humane persons and motives entered into the case in a sporadic way. It is only that the visible net gain was substantially as set forth. In abatement it should also be noted, of course, that there is no telling what else and possibly shabbier things might have come to pass under the given circumstances in the conceivable absence of Holy Church and its clerics.

But this fuller blossoming of the Faith in Iceland, and its eventual going to seed, comes on in the decades which follow the period covered by the Laxdæla; which reflects only the more genial inchoate phase of the new dispensation. So also the further growth and fruition of that system of Boss Rule that made up the working constitution of the Icelandic Commonwealth likewise comes gradually to a head at a later date; and this too is shown only in its genial beginnings in the Laxdæla. Yet the elements, civil and ecclesiastical, which eventually entered into that teamwork of intrigue and desolation that brought the Commonwealth to its end in grief and shame are to be seen here. For a nearer view of that tangle of corrosive infelicities there are an abundance of documents available; such, e. g., as the *Saga of Gudmund the Good* and the *Islendinga Saga,* together with the rest of what is included in Vigfusson's *Sturlunga Saga;* while for the Norwegian community at home the *Heimskringla,* together with certain detached sagas of the later kings of Norway, will show how the fortunes of that people, from the advent of

Christianity onward, swiftly tapered off into a twilight-zone of squalor, malice and servility, with benefit of Clergy.

The action of the saga runs over the period from the last quarter of the ninth to the first quarter of the eleventh century, coming to a head in the first decade of the eleventh.

For this translation use has been made of the Copenhagen edition of 1826, with some reference to later and more critical editions of the text. Later editions, as, e. g., that of Kaalund, are doubtless preferable in point of textual precision; but except for textual, essentially clerical, variations, there is no notable divergence between one edition and another or between one and another of the manuscript copies of the Laxdæla. The translation has also had the benefit of comparison with those made by Mrs. Press (Dent, London 1899) and Rudolf Meissner (Jena 1913), both of which are excellently well done, perhaps especially the German rendering. The German language appears to offer a more facile medium for a rendering of the Icelandic; its idioms appear to run more nearly parallel with those of the original.

As is true of the general run of Icelandic sagas, the language of the Laxdæla is the language of colloquial speech in its time; the speech of practiced storytellers, idiomatic in an extreme degree and with a pronounced bent for aphoristic diction. Consequently the difficulties in the way of a faithful translation are very appreciable. Necessarily, the idiomatic speech of that time runs on metaphor and analogy drawn from the familiar usage and custom of its own time and setting; such as would be pointed, sententious, and suggestive to the hearers who were familiar with that range of usage and custom. The language of the Saga, therefore, conveys in its own sub-

stance and structure that range of sentiments, convictions, ideals, knowledge and belief which is embodied in the action of the story. But it follows that the spirit of its action is not readily, or indeed at all adequately, to be carried over into another language which articulates with the usage current in a different time and place, and the run of whose idiom therefore is, by so much, substantially alien to that of the original.

The idiomatic speech of any given time and place springs from and reflects the workday experience and preconceptions of men in that given time and place. And much water has run under the bridge since the days when the lives of those men and women took shape in the idiomatic speech of the Saga. The run of idiom in the English language as now current is as widely out of touch with that of the Icelandic saga as the current run of custom, knowledge and belief among the English-speaking peoples is now out of touch with the arts of life in that archaic phase of their culture. Under these circumstances translation becomes in good part a work of makeshift and adumbration, in which any consistently literal rendering of the text is out of the question.

By comparison with the common run of sagas, the received text of the Laxdæla is a somewhat prosy narrative, cumbered with many tawdry embellishments and affectations of style and occasional intrusive passages of devout bombast. The indications are fairly clear that the version of the text which has come down to the present has come through the hands of a painstaking editor-author whose qualifications were of a clerkly order rather than anything in the way of literary sense, and whose penchant for fine writing would not allow him to let well enough alone. Coupled with an unctuous sanctimony and a full run of puerile superstitions, such as were current in the late thirteenth century, this clerkly animus of the editor-author

has at the same time overlaid the chief characters of the story with an ecclesiastical whitewash of meretricious abnegation, quite alien to the action in which these characters are engaged. So that, e. g., Kjartan Olafson comes to be depicted as a sanctimonious acolyte given to prayer, fasting, and pious verbiage; instead of being a wilful spoiled child, vain and sulky, of a romantic temper and endowed with exceptional physical beauty, such as the run of the story proclaims him. Whereas Gudrun, a beautiful vixen, passionate, headstrong, self-seeking and mendacious, is dutifully crowned with the distinction of having been the first nun and anchorite in Iceland and having meritoriously carried penance and abnegation to the outer limit of endurance. Yet, doubtless, all this glamour of sanctimony which the clerkly editor-author has dutifully thrown over the chief persons of the story is true to life, in the sense that such was the color of Icelandic life and sentiment in his own time, in the seedy times of the Icelandic community's decline and decomposition. Also it will be true to life in the sense that such will have been the consummation to which the drift of things under the new order converged from its beginning in the decades in which the action of the story is laid.

It may be in place to add that this translation follows the Copenhagen edition of the text also in the respect that it includes the chapters at the end (LXXIX–LXXXIII) devoted to the exploits of the younger Bolli, as well as the short story of Gunnar Thidrandabani, which is appended to that edition. This story of the younger Bolli is commonly accounted spurious, doubtless rightly so; as being a late and mythical fabric of the mediæval romancer's art, designed to make Bolli illustrious in the eyes of his descendants. Similarly spurious are the passages in the body of the saga which detail the earlier doings of Bolli the younger. So, e. g., his share as well as the share of his brother Thorleik in the killing of Helgi Hardbeinson

and in the negotiations which preceded and followed that exploit are known to be altogether fanciful; Helgi having been disposed of at a date when the two brothers were no more than two and six years old. Indeed, apart from the notice of his birth and his marriage, all that is here told of Bolli the younger is without known foundation.

THE LAXDÆLA SAGA

I. Of Ketil Flatnose and his sons and daughters.

Once upon a time there was a man by the name of Ketil Flatnef (Flatnose), a son of Björn Buna. He was a country gentleman of large means in Norway, and of a great family. He was living in the valley of Romsdal, in the Romsdal district. This lies between Sunnmœri and Nordmœri. Ketil Flatnef's wife was Yngvild, daughter of Ketil Vedur, a man of some note. There were five children. One of them was named Björn the Easterner, another Helgi Bjola; Thorunn Hyrna was a daughter of Ketil's, who was married to Helgi the Lean, son of Eyvind the Eastman and Rafarta the daughter of the Irish King Kjarfal; Unn the Wealthy was another daughter of Ketil's, married to Olaf the White, son of Ingjald, son of Frodi the Bold, who was killed by the Svertlings; Jorunn Mannvitsbrekka was still another daughter of Ketil's; she was the mother of Ketil the Foolish, who took up the land at Kirkjubæ; his son was Asbjörn, father of Thorstein, father of Surt, father of Sighvat the Law-referee (*Lögsögumaðr*).

II. Ketil and his folks decide to move out of Norway.

In the latter days of Ketil's lifetime the power of King Harald the Fairhaired grew great. So much so that none of the local kings or other great men could prosper in the land, except as he alone disposed of their rank and dignities. Now, when it came to Ketil's knowledge that King Harald was intending to deal with him as with others of the great ones, to leave his slain kinsmen unpaid-for and to make a tenant-at-will of himself as well, then he called his kinsfolk together and spoke in this wise, "You are aware of what has passed between King Harald and me, and there is no need to go into all that. But there is all the more urgent need for us to take thought of those troubles that are ahead of us. I have sure information of King Harald's ill will, and I believe that we can count on no security on that side. So I take it that there are just two things for us to choose between; either to fly the land, or to be killed each in his own place. As for me, I should be quite content to end my days like my kinsfolk before me, but I am not going to lead you into such desperate straits by my obstinacy. For I know the temper of my friends and kindred, that you would not desert us even though it would put your manhood to something of a test to stand by me." Ketil's son Björn answered him, "I am ready to let you know what I would do. I would follow the example of other men of honor and get out of this country. I see nothing to be gained by waiting

here at home for King Harald's slaves to come and chase us out of our holdings or else be killed off by them all together." To this there was hearty applause, and it was considered to be manfully spoken. So this agreement was come to, that they would move out of the country; for Ketil's sons spoke strongly for it and none had anything to say against. Björn and Helgi were for going to Iceland; they said they had heard talk of many good things to be had there, that good lands were to be had there without paying a price for it, that many whales were washed ashore there and there was a great run of salmon, and the fishing was good at all seasons. But Ketil said, "To those fishing-grounds I will never be going in my old age." Ketil then told them what he had in mind; that he would rather go out overseas into the west countries, that the outlook was good there, and that he knew many of those lands, because he had gone cruising as a pirate far and wide in that quarter.

III. Ketil's sons and son-in-law settle in Iceland; about 886–890.

SHORTLY after this Ketil made a magnificent family feast. At that time he married off his daughter Thorunn Hyrna to Helgi the Lean, as has already been set down. Then Ketil made ready to go out of the country overseas to the westward. His daughter Unn went with him, and many others of his kinsfolk. Ketil's sons set sail for Iceland that same summer together with their brother-in-law Helgi the Lean. Björn Ketilson made land on the west, in Breidafjord, and sailed up the fjord along the southern shore to where another fjord cut into the land and a lofty cliff stood out on the point on the landward side of this fjord, and where an island lay off shore. Björn passed the word that they were to make something of a stay in this place. He went ashore with a few of his men and strolled on along the beach. Here was but a narrow space between the hillside and the shingle. The place looked homelike to him. And there Björn came upon the pillars of his highseat, washed ashore in a certain creek. So then the place of their habitation was taken to have been marked down for them.[1] Björn thereupon took

[1] The same incident recurs so many times in the accounts of the settlement of Iceland that it may fairly be regarded as a standard usage. At least it passed into tradition as such. The *Öndvegissulur* were dropped overboard in due form on nearing land, and the place where they came ashore was then taken to mark the place of habitation appointed for the ship's company. These two posts, standing to either side of the middle of the

over all the land thereabout, from Stafá (Post River) to Hraunsfjord (Lava Creek), and made his home at the place which has since been known as Bjarnarhafn. He was known as Björn the Easterner. His wife was Gjaflaug, a daughter of Kjallak the Old. Their sons were Ottar and Kjallak. Kjallak's son was Thorgrim, father of Viga Styr and Vermund; Kjallak's daughter was named Helga; she was married to Vestar, of Eyr, son of Thorolf Blödruskalli (Blisterhead), who first took up the land at Eyr; their son was Thorlak, father of Steinthor of Eyr. Helgi Bjola made the land on the south, and he took up the land on Kjalarnes all the way from Kollafjord to Hvalfjord, and lived to be an old man at Esjuberg. Helgi (the Lean) made land on the north, and he took up all the land about Eyjafjord, from Siglunes to Reynisnes, and made his home at Kristnes. From Helgi and Thorunn have come the Eyfirding folk.

dais, the "highseat," and therefore facing the main entrance of the house, counted for something in the way of a household fetish in pagan times, and also as insignia of the family and its head. There is about it all a suggestive reminder of the Totem Pole.

IV. Ketil settles in Scotland; about 875–880.

Ketil Flatnef sailed to Scotland and was well received by the gentry there, for he was a famous man and of a great family, and they offered him such a place and station among them as he chose to accept. Ketil settled down there and the rest of his kinsfolk with him; all but his grandson Thorstein, who straightway went cruising as a pirate and harried the Scottish seaboard far and wide and ever came off victorious. In time he made terms with the Scottish king and so took over one-half of Scotland and became king of it. He married Thurid, daughter of Eyvind and sister of Helgi the Lean. The Scots did not long keep the peace, inasmuch as they broke faith with him. Ari Thorgilson the Scholar says concerning Thorstein's decease that he fell in a fight at Caithness. Unn the Wealthy was at Caithness at the time her son Thorstein was killed, and when she was told that Thorstein was gone, and her father also had died, then she had small hope of retrieving her fortunes in that place. So then she had a cargo vessel built secretly in the forest, and so soon as the ship was ready she fitted it out and loaded it with a rich cargo. She brought away with her all of her kinsfolk who were left alive. And there is scarcely an example known to men, of another woman having got away, single-handed, out of such great straits with so much wealth and so large a company. By this it is to be seen how greatly she surpassed all other women. Unn

also carried away with her a number of other men who were of much account and of gentle birth. There was a man by the name of Koll who was counted altogether the best man among Unn's followers. This was mostly due to the fact that he held rank as a *Hersir*.[1] There was also a man in Unn's company who was named Hörd. He too was a gentleman and of some account. Unn sailed for the Orkneys as soon as all was ready. There she made a short stay and there she married off Gro, daughter of Thorstein the Red. Gro was the mother of Greilad, who was married to Earl Thorfin, son of Earl Torf-Einar, son of Rognvald, Earl of Mœri; their son was Lödver, father of Earl Sigurd, father of Earl Thorfin; and from them comes the family of the Earls of Orkney. Unn then sailed to the Faroes and made a short stay there. There she married off a second daughter of Thorstein's. This one's name was Olöf. From her has come that family which is the noblest in that country, and which is called the Götuskeggja Folk ("The Fightingmen of Gata").

[1] The *Hersir* was a "Squire," a country gentleman of wealth and family, who was by custom invested with a degree of authority in local concerns.

V. Unn comes to Iceland and settles in the Hvammsfjord country; about 895.

HEREUPON Unn makes ready to leave the Faroes and makes known to her ship's company that she is sailing for Iceland. She takes with her Olaf Feilan, son of Thorstein the Red, and such of his sisters as were still unmarried. She then put to sea and had a good and speedy passage and made the land at Vikrarskeid (Cinderslide). There they lost their ship in a total wreck. All lives were saved and so was the cargo. She then set out for her brother Helgi's place with a company of twenty persons, and when she got there he came out to meet her and invited her to come stay with him with a company of ten persons. She answered him in high dudgeon and told him she had never known that he was such a shabby little fellow, and turned about and left him. She then set out to find her brother Björn, in the Breidafjord country; and when he got word of her coming he went out to meet her on the way with a large company and welcomed her cordially and asked her to make herself at home with him with all her following; for he knew his sister's temper. This pleased her very much and she thanked him for his lordly hospitality. She stayed there over winter entertained in grand style; for there the means were plenty and no expense was spared. In the spring she crossed Breidafjord and landed on a certain headland, where they had breakfast. The place has since been called Dögurdarness (Point Breakfast); Medalfell-

strand runs from that point on. Then she sailed on up the Hvammsfjord and reached another headland, where they made a short stay. In this place Unn lost her comb. Since then it is called Kambsnes. After that she went on through all the valleys of the Breidafjord country and took up as much of the lands as she wanted. Then she held her course up the fjord to its head. There were her highseat-pillars washed ashore. So it was plain to her where she was to make her habitation. She built up a farmstead there at the place called Hvamm and there she made her home. This same spring when Unn set up her household at Hvamm, Koll married Thorgerd, daughter of Thorstein the Red. Unn bore the expense of this wedding. She settled on Thorgerd, for her dowry, the whole of the Laxárdal (Salmon River Valley), and on this land he made his farm and set up his house, on the south side of the Laxá. Koll was a man of very great consequence. Their son was Höskuld.

VI. Unn portions out her lands.

Unn afterward gave away portions of the lands which she had taken up, to one and another. To Hörd she gave all of Hördadal as far down as the Skraumuhlaup river. He made his homestead at Hördabolstad, and he was a notable man in his time and was greatly blessed in his children. His son was Asbjörn the Wealthy who lived at Asbjarnarstad in the Örnolfsdal; he married Thorbjörg, daughter of Skeggi of Midfjord; their daughter was Ingibjörg, who was married to Illugi the Black; their sons were Hermund and Gunnlaug Ormstunga. They are known as the Gilsbecking folk. Now Unn told her men, "You will now take the reward of your labors. Now there is no lack of means with which to repay you for your hardships and your goodwill. It is known to all of you that I have given his freedom to Erp, the son of Earl Meldun. I am by no means willing to let so well-born a man bear the name of slave." Unn then gave him the lands of Saudafell (Sheepmoors), which lie between the two rivers of Tunguá and Midá. His children were Orm and Asgeir, Gunnbjörn and Halldis, who was married to Alf of the Dales. To Sökolf she gave Sökolfsdal, and he lived there ever after. Hundi was a freedman of Unn's; he was a Scotsman; to him she gave Hundadal. Osk was the name of the fourth daughter of Thorstein the Red; she was the mother of Thorstein Surt, who invented the *Sumarauki*.[1] Thorhild was a fifth daughter of Thor-

[1] An intercalation of seven days every seventh year, in correction of the calendar.

stein's; she was the mother of Alf of the Dales. There are many who trace their descent to him. His daughter was Thorgerd, wife of Ari Mársson of Reykjanes, son of Atli, son of Ulf the Squinteye and Björg, daughter of Eyvind, sister of Helgi the Lean. From them come the Reyknesing folk. Vigdis was the name of a sixth daughter of Thorstein the Red. From her have come the Höfda folk in the Eyjafjord country.

VII. Unn's death. Olaf Feilan's marriage; about 920.

Olaf Feilan was the youngest of Thorstein's children. He was a tall man and a strong one, good-looking, enterprising and capable. He was Unn's favorite, above all others, and she let it be known to her people that she meant to settle on him the whole of her estate at Hvamm after her time. Unn was now getting old and infirm. She called in Olaf Feilan and told him, "I have been thinking, my dear, that you ought to settle down and get married." Olaf took it in good part and said he would be guided by her wishes in this matter. Unn went on to say, "What I have been thinking is that your wedding had best come some time late this summer. That will be the convenient time to provide what is needed. For I am inclined to think that a great number of our friends will come together at this time. Indeed, I am thinking that this will be the last feast I will ever set up." Olaf replied, "You are very good to tell me this; but it is not my intention to marry any woman who would rob you of either your property or your authority." That fall Olaf Feilan married Alfdis. Their wedding was at Hvamm. Unn went to great expense about the wedding. She invited everyone of any consequence from round about and from distant parts. She invited her brother Björn and her brother Helgi Bjola. They came on with a large retinue. Her grandson-in-law Dala Koll came to the wedding, and Hörd of Hordadal and many others of the gentry.

It was a very large gathering, and yet there were not near as many came as Unn had invited; for the Eyfirding folks had a long way to come.

By this time old age was getting the better of Unn, so much so that she did not rise before midday although she went early to bed. And she let no one consult her on any account between the time she went to bed at night and the time she was up and dressed next day. And she spoke quite peevishly if anyone inquired about her health. On this day Unn had slept rather later than ordinary. Yet she was up and about when the wedding-guests were coming, and she went out to meet them and welcomed her friends and kinsfolk with all due courtesy; saying they were doing her a great kindness to have come such a long way to visit her. "I am speaking of Björn and Helgi particularly, but I want to thank you all for coming, every-one who is here today." Then Unn led the way into the hall (*Skáli*) and a numerous retinue with her. And when all the guests had been shown to their places there was a great deal of talk among them of what a magnificent wedding feast it was. Presently Unn spoke up and said, "I call you to witness, Björn my brother, and Helgi and all the rest of our friends and kinsfolk: This dwelling and farm, with all its stock and equipment, such as you now see it, I handsel to my kinsman Olaf to have and to hold." Thereupon Unn stood up to go, saying that she was going to the chamber in which she used to sleep. She begged them each and all to amuse themselves in any way they liked best, and gave orders that drink be served to all the company. They say that Unn was both tall and bulky; and as she walked swiftly down the hall it was remarked that she still was a personable woman. And so the guests sat at their drink into the evening until it came time to go to sleep. But next day Olaf Feilan went to his grandmother Aud's [1] bedchamber, and when he got there he

[1] The usual form of the name in other sagas.

found Unn leaning up against the bolsters. She was then dead. Olaf went back into the hall and told these tidings. And the folks were greatly touched with the way Unn had held her own till the day of her death.

So now they drank the two in one, Olaf's wedding feast and Unn's funeral feast. And on the last day of the festivities Unn was carried out to the grave-mound that had been made ready for her. She was laid down in a ship inside the grave-mound and many things of great value were buried with her. After that the grave-mound was filled up and covered over. Olaf then took over the estate at Hvamm, with all its rights and obligations, with the sanction of such kinsfolk of his as were his guests at the time. And when the festivities drew to a close Olaf gave magnificent presents to all those of the guests who were of much consequence, before they left. Olaf grew to be a man of wealth and power and a great chieftain (*Höfðingi*).[1] He lived to be an old man at Hvamm. Olaf and Alfdis had children: Thord Gellir ("The Bellower"), who married Hrodny, daughter of Skeggi of Midfjord, and whose children were Eyolf the Gray, Thor-

[1] Such a "chieftain" was a local ruler, by custom, prestige, patronage, and the strong arm, not by law. At this time (second quarter of the tenth century), as well as under the later-organized Republic, there was, in point of law, no executive or police in Iceland. The nearest modern analogue of the Icelandic *hofðingi* and his powers, dignities and duties, would be the political *"Boss,"* as he functions in American politics and in American municipal affairs. So that, in effect, the democracy of Iceland, both before and during the period of the Republic, was a comprehensive and elaborate scheme of "Boss"-rule; with no recourse to any ulterior authority, except to a judiciary which owed effectual allegiance to the Bosses of the system. The case is singular, if not unique, in the respect that there is nothing in the way of an ostensible popular government interposed between the Bosses and their underlying population. There were parliamentary bodies, local and central, which were, in effect, controlled by the Bosses. How nearly the American democracy may approach this type-form is apparently a question of the future.

arin Fylsenni (Ivorydome), Thorkel Kuggi; a daughter of Olaf Feilan's was Thora, married to Thorstein Thorskabit (Codfishbite), son of Thorolf Mostrarskegg (Mustard-whiskers); their sons were Big Börk and Thorgrim, father of Snorri Godi; Helga was a second daughter of Olaf's; she was married to Gunnar Hlifarson; their daughters were Jofrid, married to Thorodd, son of Tungu-Odd, and afterward to Thorstein Egilson; and then a daughter Thorunn, married to Herstein, son of Thorkel Blund-Ketil's son; a third daughter of Olaf's was Thordis, married to Thorarin Ragabrother, the Law-Speaker.

While Olaf was living at Hvamm his brother-in-law Dala-Koll was taken sick and died. Koll's son Höskuld was a young man at the time of his father's death. He was full-grown in mind sooner than in years. Höskuld was a handsome man and able-bodied. He took over the property left by his father. The homestead which Koll had built up came to be known by Höskuld's name and was afterward called Höskuldstadir. From the start Höskuld was blessed with many friends in the conduct of his affairs; for there were many stout connections standing over, that Koll had come in for during his lifetime.

Now Höskuld's mother, Thorgerd Thorsteinsdaughter, was still a young woman at this time, and a beautiful woman. She spoke to her son Höskuld about it, that she had a mind to go abroad and take with her such part of the property as would fall to her share. Höskuld said he was very sorry if they had to separate, but he told her he would no more oppose her wishes in this than in anything else. Presently after Höskuld purchased a half-interest for his mother in a ship which was standing on shore at Dögurdarnes; and Thorgerd went aboard of it with a large and valuable stock of goods. So Thorgerd put to sea, and the vessel made a good and speedy passage and came into Norway. Thorgerd had large family connections in Norway and many substantial kinsfolk. They made her wel-

come and gave her a free choice of anything she would have of them. And Thorgerd took it all in good part and declared her intention to settle down and make her home in that country. Thorgerd was not a widow for long before there came a man to ask her. His name was Herjolf. His rank was that of a country magistrate, well-to-do and much-esteemed. Herjolf was a big man and a strong one; not a handsome man, and yet a very striking figure. He was greatly skilled at arms. Now, when this question was taken under advisement it was for Thorgerd herself to decide, inasmuch as she was a widow, and with the advice and consent of her kinsfolk she did not decline this offer of marriage. And Thorgerd married Herjolf and went to live with him. They came to love one another dearly. Thorgerd soon showed that she was quite a capable housewife, so that he found his circumstances greatly bettered both in fame and in fortune for having got himself so excellent a wife as Thorgerd proved to be.

VIII. Hrut Herjolfson is born; Thorgerd, again a widow, returns to Iceland.

HERJOLF and Thorgerd had not been living together long before a son was born to them. This boy was duly sprinkled with water and given a name, and he was called Hrut. He grew large and strong from early youth as he was growing up. He was quite uncommonly well-grown, tall and broad-shouldered, slim-waisted and with good hands and feet. Hrut was an unusually handsome man for looks, very much after the fashion of his grandfather Thorstein or of Ketil Flatnef; and in all respects he was a very superior man. Herjolf was taken sick and died; and his death was felt to be a great loss. After this had happened Thorgerd grew uneasy and wanted to get back to Iceland again and to her son Höskuld, for she was fond of him beyond all others. So Hrut was left behind with his relations, in good hands. Thorgerd went out to Iceland and to her son Höskuld in Laxárdal. He made his mother welcome as best he could. She had much property, and she lived with Höskuld till the day of her death. After a few years Thorgerd was taken sick and died, and she was buried in a grave-mound, and Höskuld took over all her property, all the while that he declared that half of it belonged to his brother Hrut.

IX. Höskuld's marriage; about 935.

At this time Hákon Adalsteinsfostri was king of Norway. Höskuld was a liegeman of his. So that he spent every other winter at King Hákon's court and at his home in Iceland. He was a man of renown both in Norway and in Iceland. There was a certain man by the name of Björn. He was living in the Bjarnarfjord country, and he had himself taken up the land there. By his name the fjord is known which runs into the land northerly from the Steingrimsfjord. A neck of land runs out between. Björn was a man of good family and well-to-do. Ljufa was his wife's name. Their daughter was Jorunn. She was a beautiful woman, prideful and much given to show. And she was a quite exceptionally clever woman too. She was rated as the best match in all the country of the western fjords. Höskuld had heard much talk about this woman, and also that Björn was the leading man among all the freeholders throughout the countryside of the Strands. Höskuld rode out from home with a company of ten men and went on up to Björn's place in Bjarnarfjord. Höskuld met with a cordial welcome, for Björn knew all about him, and all in his favor. Presently Höskuld brought up his proposal of marriage, and Björn gave him a fair answer and said that to his thinking his daughter could not look for a better marriage, but he left it for her to decide. And when this matter came to be talked over with Jorunn she answered it in this fashion, "From all that we know of you by hearsay, Höskuld, we

should be inclined to answer favorably, for we have reason to believe that any woman will be well provided for who is married to you. And yet it is my father who will have the most to say, for in all this I will consent to anything he wishes." The long and short of these deliberations was that Jorunn was pledged to Höskuld, with a large dowry. This wedding was to be at Höskuldstadir. When this was arranged Höskuld rode away and back home to his own place and stayed quietly at home until the time set for the wedding. Björn came down from the north with a splendid retinue to the wedding, and Höskuld had many "fore guests" [1] assembled to receive him, both friends and kinsfolk, and this wedding feast was altogether quite a sumptuous affair. And when the festivities drew to a close each and all returned home to their own home-folks with many professions of goodwill and with handsome presents. Jorunn Bjarnardaughter was left behind at Höskuldstadir and took over the duties of Höskuld's household; and her management of affairs very soon showed that she was a woman of good sense, capable and well trained, and habitually somewhat overbearing. Höskuld and she got on well enough together, though with no great show of affection day by day.

Höskuld now grew to be a powerful chieftain. He was hard-handed and something of a driver, and with no lack of means. He came to count for no less in his turn than his father Koll had done before him. Höskuld and Jorunn had not been living together long before children were born to them. They had a son named Thorleik; he was the oldest of their children. A second son was named Bárd. They had a daughter named Hallgerd Langbrok (Longhose) [2]; another daughter was Thurid.

[1] *Fyrirboðsmenn* were guests come together beforehand by special invitation to receive the chief guest of the occasion in due form.

[2] This Hallgerd comes into the Njála as the wife of Gunnar.

They all were promising children. Thorleik was a large man and strong, and a fine figure of a man, close-mouthed and harsh-spoken, and the folks thought he promised to grow into an unreasonable fellow. Höskuld was in the habit of saying that he took after his kinsfolk back in the Strand country. Bárd was a gallant-looking young fellow for looks and quite strong; and there was that about him which gave promise of his growing to be more like his father's people. Bárd was an easy, good-natured person in his youth and he made many friends while he was growing up. He was Höskuld's favorite, of all his children. Höskuld's affairs now stood in a high state of bloom and prestige. About this time Höskuld married off his sister Gro to Véleif the Gray; their son was Holmgöngu-Bersi (Bersi the Duellist).

X. Of Viga-Hrapp (Hrapp the Killer) and his folks.

THERE was a certain man by the name of Hrapp who was living in the valley of the Laxá, to the north of the river over against Höskuldstadir. The place has since been known as Hrappstadir. It is now lying waste. Hrapp was a son of Sumarlidi and was nicknamed Viga-Hrapp (Hrapp the Killer). He was of Scottish extraction on his father's side, while his mother's folks all belonged in the Hebrides, where he too was born. A big man he was and stout. And he stood obstinately on his rights even when the odds were against him. And inasmuch as he was of a headstrong temper, as has just been written, and stubbornly refused to make amends for anything he had misdone, he had fled from home overseas into this west country and had bought the ground on which he was then living. His wife's name was Vigdis, and she was a Hallsteinsdaughter. Their son was named Sumarlidi. Her brother was Thorstein Surt, who was then living in Thorsnes, as before was written. Sumarlidi was living with him as a foster-child and was a very promising boy. Thorstein had been married. His wife was dead by this time. He had two daughters, Gudrid and Osk. Gudrid was married to Thorkel Trefil (Thorkel Rags), who was living at Svignaskard. He was a great chieftain and a very shrewd person. He was a son of Rauda-Björn. Thorstein's daughter Osk was married to a man in the Breidafjord country by the name of Thorarin. He was

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a sturdy man, with many friends, and he was then living with his father-in-law Thorstein; for Thorstein was getting to be quite old by that time and was quite dependent on their help. Hrapp was on bad terms with nearly everybody, overbearing and troublesome to his neighbors. He gave them a hint now and then that it would be quite awkward for them to go on living near him if they rated any other man above him. So the farmers of the neighborhood all came to the same conclusion; they all went to Höskuld and laid their grievances before him. And Höskuld told them to let him know if Hrapp molested them in any way, "for he shall not rob me of either persons or property."

XI. Of Thord Goddi and Thorbjörn Skrjup, and Höskuld's going to Norway.

THORD GODDI was the name of a man who was living in the valley of the Laxá, on the north of the river, at Goddastadir. He was a very wealthy man. He had no children. He had bought the ground he was living on. He was a neighbor of Hrapp's and was often put upon by him. Höskuld kept an eye on him, so that he was able to hold on to his homestead. His wife was Vigdis, daughter of Ingjald,[1] son of Olaf Feilan; a brother's-daughter of Thord Gellir (Thord the Bellower) and also a sister's-daughter of Thorolf Raudnef (Rednose) of Saudafell. Thorolf was a good deal of a bully as well as a man of means, and his kinsfolk were in the habit of turning to him in case of trouble. Vigdis had been married off for money rather than by inclination. Thord had a slave who had come out with him. His name was Asgaut. He was a large and able-bodied fellow, and even if he bore the name of slave, yet there were few men who could fairly be called his equal even though they were freemen; and he was a good and faithful servant to his master. Thord also had other slaves, although this one alone is mentioned by name. There was also a man by the name of Thorbjörn who was living in the Laxá valley, next above

[1] The *Landnáma* makes her a daughter of Olaf Feilan.

Thord's farm, and who was nicknamed "The Invalid." [1] He was quite well-to-do, most of it in gold and silver. He was a man of big frame and enormously strong, and he was by no means open-handed with his goods in dealing with the common sort.[2]

To Höskuld Dala-Koll's son's mind it was a slur on his prestige that the housing on his estate was not as good as he would like. So presently he bought him a ship from a Shetland man, which was laid up at the mouth of the Blandá. This ship he freighted and made ready, and made known that he was going abroad, while Jorunn was to take over the care of their estate and children. So they put to sea, and made a speedy passage, and made the land in Norway somewhat to the south. They made Hördaland, where the town of Bergen now stands. There he laid up his ship. He had many relations in that place, although none are named here. King Hákon was then sitting in the Vik [3] country. Höskuld did not go on to the king's court because his kinsfolk received him with open arms. And so that winter passed quietly.

[1] *Skriupr,* in the text, is likely to have been a copyist's error for *Skrúfr;* which would make Thorbjörn's nickname "Curly," instead of "The Frail One."

[2] The passage from the beginning of Chapter X to this point connects directly with Chapter XIV; the intervening episode being not related to what precedes or follows.

[3] The Christiania Fjord.

XII. Höskuld buys him a slave-girl.

It turned out that in the early summer the king sailed out in force to the eastward, to the Brenn Islands,[1] to renew the compact of peace for his country, as the law required to be done every third year. This was a meeting appointed between the sovereigns to dispose of such questions as came under the joint jurisdiction of the kings. And it was something of a holiday to attend this gathering, for men came together there from nearly every country of which we have any knowledge. Then Höskuld ran out his ship. He too had a mind to go to this meeting, particularly as he had not gone to see the king that winter. The place was also a good market. The gathering was a very large one and there was a good deal of merrymaking, drinking and games and all kinds of amusements. There was nothing much to tell about, but Höskuld met a number of his kinsfolk there, of those who were living in Denmark.

And on a certain day when Höskuld was strolling about bent on diversion in company with several others he came upon a large and handsome tent which stood somewhat apart from the other booths. Höskuld went up to it and into the tent, and there sat a man before them dressed in rich brocade and with a Russian hat on his head. Höskuld asked the man his name. He gave his name as Gilli; "but many know me better by my nickname: They call me Gilli the Greek." Höskuld said he had often heard

[1] At the outlet of the Göta-elv.

him spoken of, and that he was said to be the richest of all who belonged in the Gild Merchant; and he went on to say, "You are likely to have things for sale which we may want to buy." Gilli asked what it was they wanted to buy. Then Höskuld's companions spoke up and said that he was looking for something in the way of a maid-servant, "if you have such a thing for sale." Gilli replied, "Now, I take it, you are trying to put me out by calling for goods which you think I am not likely to have in stock; but it is by no means sure to turn out that way." Höskuld had already noticed that there was a curtain stretched across the booth midway; and Gilli now lifted the curtain and Höskuld saw that there were twelve women sitting behind the curtain. Then Gilli told Höskuld to go in and look them over, to see if he would care to buy any of these women. Höskuld did so. They were sitting all in a row across the booth. Höskuld looked these women over very carefully. He saw one woman sitting at the end of the line, next the tent-wall; she was poorly clad. To Höskuld the woman looked very fair, so far as he could see. Then Höskuld asked, "What is the price of this woman if I want to buy her?" Gilli told him, "You will have to pay three marks [1] of silver for her." "I should say," said Höskuld, "that you are putting rather a high price on this slave-girl. That is the price of three." "You are quite right," answered Gilli, "I am holding her at a higher price than the others. You may pick any one of these eleven and pay me one mark silver for her, and leave this one on my hands." But Höskuld told him, "I will first have to see how much silver there is in the bag which I am carrying at my belt," and told Gilli to bring out the scales. Then Gilli spoke again, "I will not deceive you in this business. There is a serious blemish on this woman and I want you to know it, Höskuld, before we close this bargain." Höskuld

[1] About 24 ounces = three ounces gold.

asked him what it might be. Gilli replied, "This woman is speechless. I have tried in more than one way to make her talk and I have never got a word from her. I am quite convinced that this woman is unable to speak." Then said Höskuld, "Bring on your implements and let us see how much this purse will weigh, that I have got here." Gilli did so. They then weighed the silver, and it turned out to be three marks by weight. Then Höskuld told him, "So it turns out that we shall make a trade. You take the money and I will take the woman. And I have to say that you have dealt fairly with me in all this business, and have not tried to cheat me in any way." So then Höskuld went his way back to his own tent. That same night Höskuld went to bed with her. And the next morning, when folks were dressing, Höskuld told her, "There is little show of elegance about these garments that Gilli the Wealthy has given you. But then it is quite true that it would cost him more to dress twelve women than just one." With that Höskuld opened one of his chests and brought out good woman's clothing which he gave her; and it was agreed on all hands that fine clothes became her exceeding well.

Now, when the high lords had finished whatever business the law called for, then the festivities and the meeting came to an end. Then Höskuld went to see King Hákon and addressed him with all due courtesy. The king looked him up and down and remarked, "We should have taken it kindly, Höskuld, even if you had come to see us sooner. And so it shall be anyway."

XIII. Höskuld returns to Iceland; Olaf the Peacock is born; about 848.

The king then made Höskuld welcome in the most friendly fashion and asked him to come aboard his own ship; "and stay with us as long as you choose to stay in Norway." Höskuld answered him, "I thank you much for your invitation. But I have many things to do this summer. Much of what has kept me so long from coming to see you is that I have been looking for house-timber." The king told him to bring his ship into Vik. Höskuld stayed on with the king for a while and the king found house-timber for him and had his ship freighted with it. Then said the king to Höskuld, "You shall not be held up here with us any longer than you like[1]; and yet it will not come handy for us to find a man in your place."[2] After this the king saw Höskuld off to his ship and told him, "I have found you a man of honor. And now it comes into my mind that this will be the last time you set sail out of Norway while I am master here." The king drew a gold ring from his wrist, which weighed a mark, and gave it to Höskuld, and he made him a second present of a sword which was

[1] No ship could leave port without the king's leave, and there were many arbitrary delays on that account.

[2] This refers to the (alleged) fact that Höskuld was a courtier (*hirðmaðr*) of King Hákon and, as such, was presumed to be permanently attached to the king's person, with a place and station assigned him from which he could absent himself only on leave granted by the king.

valued at half a mark of gold. Höskuld thanked the king for his gifts and for all the honor which he had shown him.[1] Then Höskuld goes aboard his ship and sails out to sea. They had favorable winds and made the land on the south, sailed on westward by Reykjanes and so rounded Snæfellsnes and into Breidafjord. Höskuld landed in the mouth of the Laxá, unloaded, and laid up his ship inward from the Laxá and had it roofed over there. The ground still shows where he built the shed. He also pitched his tents in the same place, and it is now called Búdardal. After this he had the timber carried home, and that was easily done, for it was no long way. Then presently Höskuld rode home with a few men in company and was well received, as might be expected. Things had been well cared for, too, while he was away.

Jorunn asked what woman this was that came with him. Höskuld said to her, "You may think I am talking nonsense, but I don't know her name." And Jorunn replied, "Then it is one way or the other; either the talk I have been hearing is a lie, or else you have had as much to say to her as to ask her name." Höskuld said it was not for him to deny it, and told her the truth of the matter, and asked to have this woman well cared for and said he would like to have her live at home with them. Jorunn's answer was, "I am not going to quarrel with your concubine that you have brought home from Norway, even if she does not know her manners. More by token if she is both deaf and dumb." Höskuld slept with his wife every night after he came home, and he had little to do with the concubine. It was plain to be seen that she was proud and well-bred, and also

[1] These (alleged) flattering attentions which the Norwegian kings habitually shower upon notable Icelanders are to be taken as staple stage-properties of the saga-tellers rather than an account of facts.

that she was no one's fool. And in the late winter Höskuld's concubine gave birth to a boy. Then Höskuld was called in and the child was shown him. And it seemed to him as to the rest of them that he had never seen a nobler or more beautiful child. Höskuld was asked to name the boy. He told them to call the boy Olaf, because his maternal uncle, Olaf Feilan, had died shortly before. Olaf was quite an exceptional child, and Höskuld was very fond of him. The following summer Jorunn declared that the concubine would have to go to work or else go away. So Höskuld arranged to have her wait on the two of them and at the same time take care of her boy. By the time the boy was two years old he was talking fluently and ran about by himself like any four-year-old child.

It so happened one morning when Höskuld was looking about on the farm, in fine weather and sunshine, shortly after sunrise, that he heard voices of someone talking. He followed the voices and came out where a brook ran by the foot of the farmyard. There he came upon a couple whom he recognized as his son Olaf with his mother. So he found out that she was not speechless, for she was talking quite freely to her boy. So now Höskuld went down to them and asked her name, and told her it was quite useless to make believe any longer; to all of which she agreed. So they sat down together on the bank below the field and she then told him, "If you want to know my name, it is Melkorka." And when Höskuld asked her to go on and tell him more about her kin and connections, she went on to say, "Myrkjartan is my father's name. He is a king in Ireland. I was kidnapped out of that country by pirates when I was fifteen years old." Höskuld told her she had kept silent altogether too long about such a noble birth. Presently Höskuld went on indoors and told Jorunn about this news that he had come across. Jorunn

replied that she did not know if the woman was telling the truth, and remarked that she did not fancy marvelous folks, anyway; and so nothing more was said about it. Jorunn treated her no better than before, though Höskuld was rather more attentive. Shortly after this, as Jorunn was undressing for bed one evening, Melkorka was drawing off her shoes and stockings and dropped them on the floor; whereupon Jorunn picked up the stockings and fetched her about the ears with them. Melkorka flared up in anger and punched her nose with her fist, so that it drew blood. Höskuld came in and parted them. After this Höskuld sent Melkorka away, and he made up a home for her farther up the Laxárdal. The place has since gone by the name of Melkorkustadir. It is now deserted. It lies on the south bank of the Laxá. There Melkorka made herself a home. Höskuld found whatever was needed for the household. Their son Olaf went with her. And as Olaf grew up it was plain to be seen that he would grow into an uncommonly handsome and well-bred man.

XIV. The killing of Hall, Ingjald's brother.

THERE was a man by the name of Ingjald. He lived in the Saudeyar (Sheep Islands). These islands lie in the Breidafjord. He was known as the Saudeyar-Godi.[1] He was a wealthy man and wise in his generation. Hall was his brother's name. He was a man of large size and good promise. He was poor, and was commonly counted something of a worthless fellow. Much of the time the two brothers did not get on well together. To Ingjald, Hall appeared to be quite careless about observing the proprieties and the good opinion of his substantial neighbors; and to Hall, Ingjald appeared to take quite too little pains about helping him make his way. Out in the Breidafjord there is a fishing-station known as the Bjarneyar. There are a number of these islands lying in a group, and the place was a very profitable fishing-ground. At that time many men were in the habit of resorting to the place for the fishing, and there were many gathered there every season. And all men of sense were concerned to see that these folk should live together in peace and goodwill on these outlying fishing-grounds; it was the talk at that time that the fishermen's luck would fail them if they fell out among themselves, and most of the men so believed and were careful.

[1] The *Goði* was a quasi-priestly magistrate, keeper of the local sanctuary, or of the sacred properties, and, at least commonly, chaplain and moderator of the local folk-mote, *Thing*, or town-meeting.

One summer, it is said, Hall, the brother of Ingjald the Saudeyar-Godi, also came out to the Saudeyar for the fishing. He shared a boat with a certain man by the name of Thorolf, from the Breidafjord country; a foot-loose person with next to no means. Yet he was a stout and handy man. Hall stayed on there for some time, and gave himself an air of being a better man than the rest of them. Now, one evening when Hall and Thorolf came ashore and were dividing their catch between them, Hall took it upon himself both to divide and to choose shares; he thought himself so much the better man. But Thorolf would yield nothing of what he thought was his due, and used big words about it. They got into a dispute, and both got angry. Hall picked up a cleaver that was lying beside him and made to hit Thorolf on the head with it; but the men ran in and held Hall off. He was all in a rage, but he got nothing done about it at the time. Their catch, too, was not divided. Thorolf took himself away during the evening, and Hall took up the catch of fish belonging to both of them. The odds of birth and kindred counted for something. Hall now found another man to take Thorolf's place in the boat and went on with the fishing as before. Thorolf was ill content with his lot; felt himself greatly put to shame in this transaction. Yet he stayed on in the islands, with his mind made up somehow to straighten out this twist that had been put upon him so much to his misliking. Hall had no misgivings, considering always that no man would dare call him to account here within the preserves of his own kinsfolk. Now, on a certain day of fair weather Hall rowed out to his fishing together with two others in the boat. The fish had been biting well during the day, and the men came rowing home in the evening in high spirits. Thorolf kept watch of Hall's movements during the day and was at the landing that evening when Hall and

his men came ashore. Hall was rowing in the bows, and as the boat touched the ground he jumped overboard to lay the boat up to the landing, and when he jumped out on the beach Thorolf was at hand and struck him down. The edge took him across the neck, by the shoulders, and his head tumbled off. Thorolf made off after that, while Hall's comrades were fumbling about him. Now this news of the killing of Hall spread swiftly throughout the islands, and it seemed very serious news; for the man had good and wide connections, although he had not been a man of good fortune.

Thorolf set about getting away out of the islands, for he knew of no one there who would be likely to take his part after this exploit. He had no kinsfolk in that neighborhood to whom he could turn for help, at the same time that there were those men near at hand who would be sure to try for his life and who had the means to do it, such as Ingjald the Saudeyar-Godi, Hall's brother. Thorolf found passage to the mainland, and he kept himself in close hiding. There is nothing further told of his doings until he came to Goddastadir one day towards nightfall. Vigdis, Thord's wife, was a relative of Thorolf's, and it was on the strength of this that he turned up at this farmstead. And Thorolf already had heard something beforehand of how matters stood, that Vigdis had rather more of a man's temper than her husband Thord. And as soon as he reached the place he turned to Vigdis that same evening and told her his troubles and begged her to help him out. Vigdis answered his pleadings to this effect: "It is not for me to deny the kinship there is between us, and I have only this to say about this thing which you have done, that I call you no less of a man for all that; and yet it seems plain to me that anyone who helps you out in your trouble will be risking both his own life and his property,

seeing what powerful men have the call to take up the feud against you. And my husband Thord," she went on to say, "is no daring fellow; and a woman's meddling in these affairs is not commonly of much effect in a case of need. And yet I can not make up my mind to turn you adrift altogether, seeing that you have come here looking for something in the way of help." So Vigdis led him away to an outhouse and told him to wait there till she called for him, and locked him in. She then went to Thord and told him: "A man by the name of Thorolf has come here looking for a place to stay. He is a relative of mine. And he thinks it would be needful for him to stay some time, in case you are willing he should do so." Thord said he did not fancy taking in lodgers; said that the man might stop over the next day to rest up, in case he had no quarrel on his hands; otherwise he must be off directly. Vigdis replied: "I have already promised him lodging, and I will not take back my words even though he is not friends with everybody"; and she then went on and told about the killing of Hall, and that this same Thorolf had killed him, who had now come to them. Thord grew quite ugly at all this; said he knew to a certainty that Ingjald would make him pay a heavy fine for what had already been done in the way of sheltering him, "if any doors have been closed behind this man." Vigdis told him: "Ingjald will not be asking you to pay for having given him just one night's refuge, because he is going to be here all winter." "At this rate you will strip me penniless," said Thord, "and it goes altogether against the grain with me to have such a luckless fellow about the place." Still, Thorolf stayed on there through the winter.

This came to Ingjald's notice; who was due to bring action on his brother's account. He made ready to set out for the inner country of Breidafjord toward the end of winter, got out a small vessel which he owned and

set sail with a company of twelve. They ran down from the west in a stiff northwester and landed in the mouth of the Laxá at nightfall, drew up the boat, and went on to Goddastadir that same evening. Their coming was not unexpected, and they were well received. Ingjald called Thord aside and brought up his errand—that he had learned of Thorolf's being there, his brother's slayer. Thord said there was nothing to it. But Ingjald told him not to argue the point; "Let us rather come to terms. You hand the man over and so not drive me to use force; and I have brought with me three marks of silver which will be yours. At the same time I will overlook any blame you have incurred in harboring Thorolf." To Thord the silver seemed very fair to see, and added to it was the quittance of all those grave charges which had worried him more than all the rest, that it would come to heavy costs. So Thord made answer: "Now I shall be made a butt of by the folks about for this bargaining with you; still, it is a bargain between us." So they went to sleep until towards morning, a little before daybreak.

XV. Thorolf's Escape.

Ingjald and his men got up and dressed. Vigdis asked Thord what the talk had been about between Ingjald and himself the evening before. He told her they had talked about many things, and that they had come to an understanding that a search would be made and they would be held blameless if Thorolf was not found on the place; "So now I have had my slave Ásgaut take the man out of the way." But Vigdis replied that she had no taste for lying, and also that she disliked to have Ingjald sneaking about in her house; still he would have to do as he chose about it. So then Ingjald searched the place over without finding his man. About that time Ásgaut returned, and Vigdis asked him where he had left Thorolf. Ásgaut told her: "I took him to our sheep-sheds, as Thord told me to do." To which Vigdis replied: "Could anything be more in Ingjald's way when he goes back to his boat? We will not take the chance of their having agreed on just that plan last night. I want you to go right away and take him out of the way. You are to go with him to Saudafell, to Thorolf. In case you do as I tell you, you will get something for it. I will give you your freedom and money enough to take you wherever you want to go." Ásgaut agreed to do so, and went down to the sheep-cote and found Thorolf, and told him to come away with him at once. About the same time Ingjald was setting out from Goddastadir with his men, for he was now looking to get the value of his

silver. And on going down the road from the farmyard they saw two men coming to meet them. They were Ásgaut and Thorolf. This was early morning, so that there was but little daylight. Now Ásgaut and Thorolf found themselves in a good deal of a pinch, with Ingjald to one side and the Laxá river on the other. The river was running at a high flood, with a strip of ice along either bank and open water in midstream. The river was very forbidding. Then Thorolf turned to Ásgaut and said: "Now it looks to me as if we had two things to choose between; one is to stay and wait for them here on the bank and make a fight for it as long as our strength and courage lasts; and the chances are that Ingjald will make short work of taking our lives. Our other choice is to take to the river, and that too looks like taking chances." Ásgaut told him to choose for himself, and that he was not going to leave him now anyway, whatever he chose to do about it. Then Thorolf spoke: "We will make for the river." And so they did; stripping themselves down as light as they could. They went down across the strip of shore-ice and took to the water; and what with their being stout men, and a longer life appointed them, so they made their way over the river and out on the shore-ice on the other bank. It was about the time they had got across the river, that Ingjald and his company reached the river on the other bank. Then Ingjald spoke up to his men; "What are we going to do now? Shall we try the river or not?" They told him that was for him to say, and that they would follow his lead, but they thought the river was not fordable. Ingjald admitted as much, "and we will quit the river and turn back." So soon as Thorolf and Ásgaut saw that Ingjald and his men were not going to try the crossing, they wrung out their clothing and got ready to go on. They kept going all that day, and came to Saudafell by nightfall. There they were made welcome, for there was

open house for all comers. And that same evening Ásgaut went to Thorolf Raudnef and told him all there was to tell about their coming; that his kinswoman Vigdis had sent this man to him for shelter and safe-keeping, who had just come; and told him everything about Thord Goddi's dealings with them, and brought out the tokens which Vigdis had sent by him to Thorolf. Thorolf made answer and said, "I have no doubt of these tokens; and I will surely take this man in, at her request. To my mind all this affair is much to Vigdis's credit. It is a great shame that such a woman should be so meanly married. Now as for you, Ásgaut, you are welcome to stay just as long as you like." Ásgaut replied that he was not staying long. So Thorolf took his namesake into his household, and he became one of his men; and Ásgaut and he parted good friends and Ásgaut set out for home.

Now there is something to tell of Ingjald, that he turned back to Goddastadir when Thorolf and he had parted company. Meantime men had been gathering from the near-lying farms in answer to summons from Vigdis. There were no less than twenty men on the place. And so soon as Ingjald got back to the house he called Thord out and told him: "You have treated us like a rogue, Thord," said he, "for I have found out for sure that you have smuggled our man out of the way." Thord protested that he was in no way at fault in all this business; and so the whole of the arrangement between them came out. Ingjald now demanded his money back, which he had paid over to Thord. Vigdis was standing by while they were talking, and she now spoke up and told them that it had all turned out very much as they deserved; and told Thord that it was not for him to hold on to this money, "for you, Thord," said she, "have come by this money like a coward." Thord replied that she would likely have her way about it. Vigdis thereupon went indoors to a box belonging to Thord, where she found,

on the bottom of it, a bulky bag of money. She takes the bag and goes out with it to where Ingjald was standing, and tells him to take his money. Ingjald is much pleased at this, and reaches for the money-bag. Vigdis swings the money-bag up and hits him on the nose with it, so that it brought the blood. With it all she spent many nasty words on him, and told him in conclusion that he shall never lay hands on this money again, and finished by telling him to be off. Ingjald found that the best thing for him was to get away right soon. And so he did. And he made no stop on his way until he got home, sadly put out about the whole affair.

XVI. Vigdis divorces Thord; Thord adopts Olaf Höskuldson.

About that time Ásgaut got home. Vigdis made him welcome and asked what welcome they had had at Saudafell. He spoke very well of all that, and also repeated what Thorolf Raudnef had said in taking leave of him. She was much pleased at that; "And now, Ásgaut," said she, "you have done your errand well and faithfully, and now I will also tell you what you will get for it. I give you your freedom, so that from this day forth you shall bear the name of a free man. At the same time you are to have the money which Thord received as the price of my kinsman's head. So this money goes to the right place." Ásgaut thanked her for these gifts with many fair words. The following summer Ásgaut took passage at Dögurdarnes, and the ship put out to sea. They met with heavy weather and had a short passage. They reached Norway. Ásgaut afterward went on to Denmark and settled there. And there he was accounted a good and sturdy man. And here ends the tale of him. Now, after this scheming of Thord Goddi and Ingjald Saudeyar-Godi, when they arranged to take her kinsman Thorolf's life, Vigdis repaid it with open hatred, and she presently divorced Thord Goddi[1] and returned to her kinsfolk and told all the tale to them.

[1] By a declaration of divorce before witnesses, as was the custom.

Thord Gellir was by no means pleased with it all, yet it was allowed to pass without protest. Vigdis carried away no more from Goddastadir than her own personal effects. The Hvamm-folk passed the word that they meant to take over the property which Thord Goddi had in his keeping. At this he took alarm and rode over straightway to Höskuld and told him his troubles. Höskuld remarked: "You have been scared more than once before when you have had to do with less odds than now." Thord then made him an offer of pay for assistance and added that he had no mind to count the cost too closely. And Höskuld replied: "It is well known that you would never willingly let any man gain at your expense." "That is not the case now," said Thord, "for I shall be quite content to have you take handsel of all this property. So also I will undertake to make your son Olaf my foster-child and leave him the whole property after my time; for I have no relations in this country, and to my mind the property will be better disposed of in that way than to have Vigdis's folks clap their claws on it." To this arrangement Höskuld agreed and had it covered by contract in due form.

This was by no means to Melkorka's liking. She considered the adoption altogether too humble. Höskuld told her she was short-sighted; "Thord is an old man and childless, and it is my intention that the whole of it is to go to Olaf after his day; and then, you will be able to see him whenever you like." So Thord took Olaf into his keeping at seven years old and became very much attached to him. All these doings came to be known to those who held the claims against Thord Goddi, and now any recovery of the property in question seemed more doubtful than ever. Höskuld also sent handsome presents to Thord Gellir and begged him not to take umbrage at any of this; seeing that they would have been able to collect no payment from Thord at law anyway. Vigdis,

he said, had brought no charges against Thord which were true and at the same time would be admitted as valid ground for a declaration of divorce; "moreover, Thord was no less of a man for having found means to rid himself of a man that had been thrust upon him for support and who was 'beset with quarrels like a bramble bush.'" And when this message from Höskuld came to Thord Gellir, and with it gifts of great value, then Thord Gellir quieted down and set his mind at rest, and expressed the opinion that any property that might be in Höskuld's keeping was in a safe place, and accepted the presents. And so everything quieted down, although there was something less of goodwill between them than before. Olaf grew up under Thord Goddi's care and grew to be a large man and a stout one; and so handsome a man was he that his equal was not to be had. He rode to the Althing when he was twelve years of age, and there the folks from distant parts made a point of seeing and admiring how wonderfully and beautifully he was made. And Olaf kept up the same gait in the care of his dress and his equipage of weapons. So that he was on that account an outstanding figure among all men. Thord Goddi's circumstances improved greatly from the time Olaf came to live with him. Höskuld gave him a nickname and called him the Peacock. This name stuck by him.

XVII. Hrapp dies, and walks again.

THE story goes about Hrapp that he became very troublesome, made himself such a nuisance to his neighbors that they were scarcely able to hold their own against him. Hrapp was unable to get any hold on Thord Goddi after Olaf began to get on his feet. Hrapp was of the same temper as ever, but his powers were failing, for old age was coming upon him so that he was bedridden. Hrapp called up his wife Vigdis and told her, "I am not used to being sickly," said he, "and it is most likely that this sickness will end our life together. And now, as soon as I am dead I want a grave dug for me under the main doorway of the house; and I am to be buried standing there in the doorway. So I will be able more conveniently to keep an eye on my household and things." Hrapp died presently after, and everything was done as he had ordered. But troublesome as he had been while he was alive, yet it got to be much worse now that he was dead; for he walked again a good deal. It is said that he killed nearly all of his household in the course of his walking, and he did much mischief to nearly everyone who lived near the place. The house at Hrappstadir was now deserted. Vigdis, Hrapp's wife, went back into the West country, to her brother Thorstein Surt, who gave her a home and took over her property.

Meantime, very much as before, the folks turned to Höskuld and told him of all this mischief that Hrapp was making them, and begged him to help them out. Hös-

kuld said he would do so. He went over to Hrappstadir with a few men and had them dig up Hrapp and take him away to another place where either cattle or men were least likely to come near. After this was done Hrapp's walking abated somewhat. Hrapp's son Sumarlidi came into the property which he left, and it was a large and fine property. Sumarlidi moved in and set up housekeeping at Hrappstadir the following spring, and when he had been living there a little while he went mad and presently died. So now Vigdis, his mother, comes into all the property. She is not willing to move in on the Hrappstadir lands. So Thorstein Surt takes over this estate in trust. Thorstein was growing rather old by that time, although he still was quite active and in fair health.

XVIII. Thorstein Surt is drowned, with all his folks.

It was about this time that Thorstein's kinsmen, Big Börk and his brother Thorgrim, were beginning to count for something among the people about the Thorsnes countryside. And it became plain very shortly that the two brothers were setting themselves up to be the leading men thereabout, both in fact and in reputation. And now when Thorstein came to see how things were going, he was not willing to put up with it, and so he let it be known that he had made up his mind to shift over to Hrappstadir in the Laxárdal. Thorstein Surt himself set out right after the spring assizes,[1] while the live-stock was driven up along the beach. He fitted out a lugger and loaded it and went aboard with a company of twelve persons altogether. Among them was his son-in-law Thorarin; and there were also Thorstein's daughter Osk, and Helgi's daughter Hild, who also went with them; she was then three years of age. Thorstein set sail before a stiff southwester. They sailed up toward the narrows, where the tide runs strong, and were carried into the channel known as the Kolkistu-Straum. This has one of the strongest currents there are in the Breidafjord waters. They presently lost control of the vessel. What had most to do with it was that the tide was running out, while the wind was shifty; the weather was showery, with stiff squalls when the showers broke and next to no

[1] *Várþing.*

breeze in between. Thorarin was steering and had wound the steering lines about his shoulders, because the boat was crowded and there was little room. The boat was loaded with household goods for the most part, and the cargo was piled up high. Land was near on either side. The boat made little headway, because the current was setting violently against them. Presently they ran on the shallows, without wrecking the vessel. Thorstein gave orders to take in the sail in a hurry and told the men to push the boat off with poles. That shift was tried, but it came to nothing, for the water was so deep on both boards that their poles would not touch bottom. So all they could do was to wait for the incoming tide. The water ebbed out from under the boat. During the day while they waited there they saw a seal swimming about in the channel, much larger than common. He circled about the boat during the day, swimming with long strokes. To all of them it seemed as if his eyes were human. Thorstein told them to shoot the seal. They tried, but it came to nothing. Then presently the tide came in, and just as it was a near thing that the boat would come afloat, then a stiff squall struck them and capsized the boat. And they were all drowned that were on board, except one man who was washed ashore with the timbers. This man was named Gudmund. The place has since been known as the Gudmund Islands.

Gudrid, wife of Thorkel Trefil, was the lawful heir of her father Thorstein Surt. Now these tidings were told far and near, of the drowning of Thorstein Surt and those who had lost their lives with him. Thorkel straightway sent for this man Gudmund, who had come ashore; and when he had come to meet him Thorkel comes to an understanding with him privately, that he is to tell the story of this incident, so far as concerned the decease of these persons, in the way Thorkel told him to. To this Gudmund agreed. Thorkel then calls on him to give an ac-

count of the matter in the hearing of many others. Gudmund then told his story as follows: He recited that Thorstein had drowned first, then his son-in-law Thorarin. Hild would then inherit the property, as she was Thorarin's daughter. Next, he said, the girl was drowned; as Osk would then inherit from her; and Osk was the last of them to die. In this way all of the property would come into Thorkel Trefil's hands, because his wife Gudrid was the lawful heir of her sister Osk. So now this account of these matters was put forward by Thorkel and his friends; but Gudmund had given out a slightly different account earlier. To Thorarin's relations this tale seemed a little dubious; they protested that they would put no faith in it without proof. They laid claim to one-half the property, along with Thorkel, but Thorkel claimed to be sole heir and called for proof to be made by ordeal in the manner of that time. The ordeal in proof of good faith was in those times what is called "Going under the Sod." [1]

In this act a strip of sod was cut loose from the sward; the ends of the strip being fast to the ground; and the person who was to take the ordeal must then pass through under this strip. Thorkel Trefil had his doubts as to whether everything about the decease of these persons had come to pass just as Gudmund and he had made out on the last occasion. The Heathen who had to undergo such an ordeal were no less concerned about it in their time than Christian folk now are when put to the proof by oath or ordeal. In that time the man who "went under the sod" was held blameless if the strip of sod did not fall on him. So now Thorkel arranged with two men, who were to get into a quarrel about one thing or another and get close to the place just as the ordeal was going forward, and to stumble against the loop of sod by so much that all men could see they had upset it. Presently the person who

[1] *At ganga undir jarðarmen.*

was to carry out the ordeal[1] proceeded to the act, and just as he was passing under the loop of sod these two men who had been put up to it rushed upon one another with drawn weapons, met right next the sod and tumbled over each other; and the loop of sod came down, as might be expected. Others then ran in between and parted them, which was easily done, seeing that they were fighting without malice. Thorkel called for a hearing on the ordeal. And now all his men spoke up, that all would have gone well if no one had spoiled it. Thereupon Thorkel took over all the personal property, but the lands of Hrappstadir were laid by.

[1] Then, as in Christian times, the ordeal was commonly taken by proxy.

XIX. Hrut Herjolfson comes out to Iceland.

Now, of Höskuld it is to be said that he was doing very well. He was a great chieftain. Also he had in his keeping a deal of property belonging to his brother Hrut Herjolfson. There were many who had remarked that it would cut into his wealth quite seriously if he were to pay over fully the whole of Hrut's inheritance from his mother. Hrut was then attached to the court of King Harald Gunnhildarson, and ranked high with him. What counted for most in that way was that Hrut was ever the best man in all manner of exploits. And then Gunnhild, the queen-dowager, too held him in such high esteem that she counted no man at court his equal in any respect, in what he had to say or in any other way. And if the talk ran on the merits of this man and that, and one were compared with another, it was plain to be seen that to Gunnhild's mind it could only come of stupidity or envy if any man were compared with Hrut. Inasmuch as Hrut had large property interests to look after in Iceland, as well as a noble kindred, he came to have a great desire to visit that country. So he made ready to go to Iceland. The king made him a present of a ship at parting, and said that he had tested him and found him a gallant gentleman. Gunnhild saw Hrut off to his ship and told him: "This need not be said in a whisper; that I have found you to be a noble gentleman; for in all manly deeds you are the equal of the best in the land, and for

wise counsel you have the better of them all." She gave him a gold ring at parting and bade him farewell. Then she drew her cloak over her head and went swiftly back home to town; while Hrut went aboard and sailed out to sea.

He had a good passage and made the land in the Breidafjord. He sailed up the fjord to the islands. Presently after he sailed inward by the Breidasund, landed at Kambsnes and ran his gangways ashore. The coming of the ship was told about, as also that Hrut Herjolfson was the master of it. Höskuld took no notice of these tidings, nor did he go to meet him. Hrut drew his ship on land and laid it up. He set up a household at the place which has since been known as the Kambsnes farm. After that Hrut rode over to see his brother Höskuld and brought up his claim to his mother's inheritance. Höskuld said he had nothing to pay, said his mother had not gone out of Iceland empty-handed at the time she went out and met Herjolf. Hrut took it ill, but rode away with no more ado. All of Hrut's kinsfolk made much of him, save only Höskuld.

Hrut lived at Kambsnes three years, and he was forever calling on Höskuld for payment, at the Things and at any other lawful gathering, and was ever fair-spoken in pushing his claim. Most men were of opinion that Hrut was in the right, but Höskuld protested that Thorgerd had married Herjolf without his consent; and that he was at that time his mother's guardian at law; and there the matter stood. The fall next following Höskuld went on a visit to Thord Goddi. Hrut heard of his going and rode over to Höskuldstadir with a company of twelve men. He gathered up and drove off twenty head of cattle. The same number he left behind. Then he sent a man to Höskuld to tell where the cattle were to be looked for. Höskuld's farm-hands got out their weapons right away, and word was also passed to the nearer

neighbors, so that there were fifteen of them altogether. They all rode as fast as they could, every one of them. Hrut and his men saw nothing of the pursuit until they were nearly back home at Kambsnes. Hrut and his men straightway dismounted and tied their horses, and ran out on a low sandhill. Hrut told them to make a stand and wait for them there, and remarked that even if it was slow work getting his due from Höskuld, still he had no mind to let it be told about the neighborhood that he had run away from Höskuld's slaves. The men with Hrut told him the odds were against them. Hrut said he did not mind that; said they would fare all the worse the more there were of them. The Laxdalers jumped off their horses and made ready. Hrut told them never to mind the odds, and drove at them. He was wearing a helmet, had a drawn sword in one hand and a shield in the other. He was a master of fence, and Hrut was then so beside himself that few were able to keep up with him. Both sides fought well for a while, but very shortly the Laxdalers found they had to do with more than their match in dealing with Hrut, for he killed two of them at one onset. After that the Laxdalers begged for quarter. Hrut said they were to be given quarter of course. By that time all of Höskuld's farmhands were wounded, such of them as were still on their feet, and four of them were killed. Hrut went on home, and he was wounded more or less himself, but his men little or none, he had himself gone into the thick of it. The place has been known as the Orrustudal[1] since the time they fought there. Hrut then had the cattle slaughtered.

It is told of Höskuld that he got his men together in a hurry when he heard of the raid, and rode back home. That was about the same time as his farmhands got home. They told how things had gone wrong with them. Höskuld was in a wild passion at this and declared that he

[1] "Battle Valley."

was not going to put up with robbery and manslaughter from him any more. He drew men together all day long. His wife Jorunn now came and asked him what it was he meant to do. "I have not been making many plans," said he, "but I would like to have the talk run on something else, rather than the killing of my farmhands." Jorunn told him: "It is a pretty ugly meaning if it is that you mean to kill such a man as your brother is. And there are those who say he would not have been in the wrong even if Hrut had claimed this payment before this. He has now shown that he is not content to be barred out of his own any longer; which is also what a man of his birth ought to do. Now it is not likely that he has made up his mind to try conclusions with you in this fashion until he knew that he could count on something in the way of backing from some of the bigger men; and indeed I have been told that there have been messages passing back and forth in all privacy between Thord Gellir and Hrut. Such a thing seems to me to be worth looking into. Thord would doubtless be quite pleased to lend a hand in such a case, which is quite clearly within the law. You also know quite well, Höskuld, that ever since the trouble came up between Vigdis and Thord Goddi there has not been the same close friendship between Thord Gellir and yourself as before; even if you did stave off the open enmity of Thord and his friends at the outset with valuable presents. And I have also no doubt, Höskuld," she went on to say, "that they are feeling quite sore about the way in which you are keeping them out of what they think is their own by rights, you and your son Olaf. Now, to me it would seem the more prudent thing for you to make your brother Hrut a reasonable offer, for in this case it will hold true that 'a fierce wolf can easily be caught.' I believe Hrut will take it in good part and in a friendly spirit; for I am told that the man is a wise one. He will have the sense to see

that both of you stand to gain by it." Höskuld quieted down a good deal at this talking-to from Jorunn. All this struck him as being reasonable. Mutual friends of the two acted as go-betweens and carried offers of settlement on Höskuld's part to Hrut. Hrut took it in good part; replied that he was quite content to come to terms with Höskuld; said he had stood ready for a long time past to come to such an amicable settlement as was due between kinsfolk, if only Höskuld would deal fairly with him. Hrut also said he was willing to make up to Höskuld for any trespass which he had been guilty of on his part. So now all these matters of dispute are settled and disposed of between the two brothers, Höskuld and Hrut. And from this time forth they lived together as good kinsfolk should. Hrut minds his own affairs, and grows to be a man of wealth and consequence. He was not given to meddling, commonly, but was inclined to be overbearing in any case where he took part.

Presently after this Hrut moved out and settled in another homestead. He lived at the place which is now called Hrutstadir ever after. He had a *hof*[1] in the

[1] Commonly translated "temple"; a better translation would perhaps be "chapel." The *hof* appears commonly to have been a rather slight structure of very moderate dimensions and placed somewhat out of the way; an unobtrusive container of certain religious and magical articles of use or of virtù and a retreat in which certain little-known rites of religious or magical import were performed; mostly of a private and personal nature apparently. At Helgafell, in Thorsnes, there appears to have been a *hof* of a public, or semi-public, character, supported at least in part by a levy of tithes. Apart from this instance, it seems doubtful if pagan Iceland contained any neighborhood sanctuary or communal *hof,* such as could reasonably be called a temple. It is doubtful if these *hof* in pagan Iceland are to be rated otherwise than as private chapels for the personal use of their owners. It was somewhat otherwise in pagan Norway, where many structures of this nature were of larger dimensions and served as neighborhood sanctuaries, apparently much after the fashion of parish churches. A puzzling feature of the case is the fact that

farmyard. Traces of it are still to be seen. The spot is now known as the Troll run.[1] The highway now runs across the place. Hrut married, and took to wife a woman by the name of Unn, daughter of Mörd Gigja. This Unn left him. Out of this arose the troubles there were between the Laxdalers and Fljotshlid folks. Hrut married a second wife, by the name of Thorbjörg. She was a daughter of Armod. Hrut married yet a third wife, whose name is not given. Hrut had sixteen sons and ten daughters by these two wives. The story goes that he came riding to the Thing one summer and fourteen of his sons with him. It is remembered and spoken of because it was considered a mark of force and manhood; for all of his sons were sturdy fellows.

there is no evidence of a priesthood. On the change of faith in that country many of these neighborhood *hof* in pagan Norway appear to have been taken over and consecrated to the Christian service, passing over into the service of the new faith as *Stavekirker;* far the greater number of the *Stavekirker* having obviously been of pagan origin.

[1] *Tröllaskeid;* perhaps better translated "Magic Ring" or "Fairy Ring." Various other places in Iceland were known by the same epithet.

XX. *Melkorka marries Thorbjörn Skrjup; Olaf goes abroad; about 855.*

And now Höskuld sits quietly at home and is beginning to grow feeble with old age, while his sons have now grown to manhood. Thorleik made his home on the farmstead called Kambsnes, and Höskuld made over to him his share of the property. He then married, and took to wife a woman by the name of Gjalflaug, a daughter of Arnbjörn, son of Sleitu-Bjarni (Slack-Bjarni) and Thorlaug, daughter of Thord of Höfdi. It was a notably good match; Gjaflaug was a beautiful woman and a reserved and prideful one. Thorleik was harsh and exacting, and a man of uncommon force and tenacity. There was no great affection between the two kinsmen, Hrut and Thorleik. Höskuld's son Bárd stayed at home with his father; by this time he had the management of things no less than Höskuld. Of Höskuld's daughters there is little to tell here, although there are good men have come from them. Olaf Höskuldson, too, was a grown man by this time, and he was as fine-looking a man as has ever been seen.

Melkorka was living at Melkorkustadir, as has already been related. Höskuld avoided the care of Melkorka and her affairs more and more as time went on. He said that to his mind all that was no less her son Olaf's concern. And Olaf said he would take such care of her as he best could. To Melkorka it seemed that Höskuld was

treating her shamefully. And she made up her own mind to do something or other which he would be sorry for. Thorbjörn Skrjup had mostly had the management of Melkorka's farm. He had asked her to marry him after he had been on the place for some time, but Melkorka would not have it.

Now, there was a sea-going ship laid up ashore at Bordeyri in the Hrutafjord. Örn was the name of its master. He was of the court of King Harald Gunnhildarson. Melkorka had a talk with her son Olaf when next they met, and told him that she would like to have him go abroad to visit high-born kinsfolk of hers: "For I have told you the truth, that Myrkjartan is really my father, and he is king of the Irish. And you could quite conveniently take ship at Bordeyri now." Olaf replied: "I have talked all that over with my father, and he does not think much of it. And then it happens, too, that whatever property my foster-father and I are possessed of is mostly in lands and livestock, rather than Iceland wares[1] in store." Melkorka said: "I have no mind to hear you called the slave-girl's son any longer, and if that is all that stands in the way of your going, that you think you have too little goods in hand, then I would even make shift to marry Thorbjörn, if that would hasten your going. I believe he will supply the trade-goods, as much as you want, if he is allowed to marry me. And then there is this, too, that these are two things, both of which will annoy Höskuld as soon as he comes to hear of them, that you have left the country and that I have married a man." Olaf told his mother to do as she liked. Presently after this Olaf spoke to Thorbjörn, that he would like to get the goods of him as a loan, and that he would pay him well for them. Thorbjörn said: "That depends altogether on whether I am to marry Melkorka. In that case I am ready to say that any prop-

[1] Chiefly coarse woollen cloth and dried fish.

erty of mine is at your disposal as freely as what you already have." Olaf told him that that could be arranged to suit, and so they talked it all over and made their arrangements; all of which was to be kept quiet for the time being.

Now Höskuld spoke to Olaf and asked him to ride with him to the Thing. But Olaf told him he would be unable to do so because he would be busy at home; said he planned to fence off a penfold for lambs down by the Laxa river. This pleased Höskuld much, that he was busying himself about the doings on the farm. So Höskuld rode away to the Thing; while things were got ready for a wedding at Lambastadir, in which Olaf shaped the terms of the contract to his own mind. Olaf drew out of the undivided property thirty hundreds[1] in wares; and no payment to be made for it. Bárd Höskuldson was present at the wedding, and was a party to these arrangements. And as soon as the wedding was over, then Olaf rode away down to the ship, where he found Örn, the shipmaster, and took passage with him. But before Melkorka parted with him she placed in Olaf's hands a massive gold finger-ring and told him: "This my father gave me for a teething-fee, and I am sure he will know it when he sees it." Also she gave him a knife and belt and told him to hand these things to her nurse: "I believe she will not deny these tokens." And Melkorka went on to say: "I have sent you out from home as best I can, and I have taught you to speak

[1] The value of 30 (long) hundred ells of woollen frieze of standard width and weight. The standard width was two ells—approximately one yard, perhaps under rather than over. Such a standard ell of *wadmal* was the legal equivalent of one-sixth ounce of silver. Olaf's cargo of Iceland wares therefore foots up to $30 \times 120 = 3600$ ells, more or less; or $\frac{3600}{3} = 1200$ ounces of silver, more or less. These values are in the nature of estimates. The *hundrad*, as a unit of value, varied widely, from time to time as well as in its various applications.

Irish so that you will have no trouble on that score, wherever you land in Ireland." So now they parted after this. The wind came up so soon as Olaf reached the ship, and they sailed out to sea.

XXI. Olaf goes to Norway and to Ireland.

Now Höskuld comes home from the Thing and is told these tidings. He took it much to heart. But seeing that his nearest relatives were concerned in it, he took it all quietly and held his peace. Olaf and his company had a good voyage and reached Norway. Örn urged Olaf to go to court, to King Harald; saying that he had shown marked favor to men of no better connection than Olaf. Olaf said he was content to do so. So now Olaf and Örn go on up to court and are well received. The king straightway took notice of Olaf, on his kinsfolk's account, and invited him to stay on with him. Gunnhild made much of Olaf as soon as she learned that he was a nephew of Hrut's. But there were also those who said that she would have found pleasure in talking with Olaf anyway, even if he enjoyed no such advantage.

Olaf grew moody as the winter drew on. Örn asked what was worrying him. Olaf said: "I have a journey to make overseas to the West, and I should take it as a great favor if you could help matters along so that this voyage could be made this coming summer." Örn begged Olaf not to set his heart on it; said he knew of no ships that were expected to sail overseas to the West. Here Gunnhild broke into their talk and said: "I hear something now in your talk which has never appeared before; you two are at odds." Olaf turned to Gunnhild with a courteous welcome, but did not let the matter drop. Presently Örn went his way, and Olaf and Gunnhild then

went on with their talk. Olaf told her what he wanted to do and how much it would mean to him; that King Myrkjartan was his mother's father. Then said Gunnhild: "I will fit you out for this voyage, so that you shall be able to go out there in just as lordly a fashion as you like." Olaf thanked her for her promise. Gunnhild then saw to it that a ship was fitted out and manned; asked Olaf to say how many men he wanted to go with him overseas to the West; and Olaf called for sixty men, and added that he would very much like to have this crew look like men at arms rather than traders. She told him that so it should be done: Örn was told off for the voyage, along with Olaf. This crew was extremely well equipped. King Harald and Gunnhild went down with Olaf to the ship to see him off, and they told him they would add their own good luck[1] to his, along with such other acts of friendship as they had done for him. Which was a simple and obvious matter, said King Harald, seeing that they knew and could tell of no man of fairer promise coming out of Iceland in their time. King Harald then asked how old a man he might be. "I am now eighteen years," said Olaf. Then spoke the King: "Very rare and noteworthy are such men as you; you are yet but little past the years of childhood. Come straight back to us when you return." After this the king and Gunnhild bade Olaf farewell. Then he went on board and stood out to sea.

[1] The *Hamingia*—good luck, destiny, *mana*—of any person was a congenital attribute. It was conceived to be transferable in some degree; so that its usufruct might inure to the benefit of a second party; and in any case its influence for good would extend to the lucky person's near friends and conduce to their success and profit. It was a magical force, of a spiritual nature, but greatly valued for the material benefits to which it conduced; not unlike the divine blessing, as that functions among religious peoples. The friendship of any "lucky" person was greatly valued—might almost be said to have been capitalized.

They met with hard weather that summer; came in for a great deal of fog; with light winds, and shifty what there was of them. They were driven about far and wide on the high seas. Most of the men on board quite lost their bearings. After some time the fog lifted overhead and the wind came up. They then took to the sails. Then arose the question as to which way Ireland was to be looked for, and the men were not agreed about it. Örn took one side of the question, with the greater number of the ship's company against him. They argued that Örn was out of his reckoning the worst of them all, and that the greater number should rule. At length they put the question up to Olaf, but Olaf said: "I would have those rule who are the best informed. To my mind, home-bred bungling and guesswork will serve us all the worse the more there are of them." The question seemed settled as soon as Olaf had so spoken, and Örn laid the course from that time on. So they sailed on, night and day, but ever with light winds. Until on a certain night the men on watch jumped up and called all hands to turn out in a hurry; saying they could see land ahead and so close that they were near running aground. The sail was set, with a very light wind. The men turned out at once, and Örn gave orders to stand off the shore if it could be done. But Olaf said: "We can do nothing of the kind. I can see the surf on both bows and all about astern. Take in the sail, and hurry. Then we will see what is to be done, when daylight comes." None of them knew what land it was. So now they put out an anchor, which caught ground immediately.

There was much talk as to where they had come to; but as soon as daylight came they knew it for Ireland. Then said Örn: "I am thinking that we have not come into a right good berth. For this place is far from any port and from those towns where outlanders have the

right of entry. Also we are left high and dry by the ebb, like a stranded stickleback; and I take it that it would be within the law of these Irish for them to claim all these goods that we are carrying as their lawful prize. For they will call any stranded property flotsam and wreckage where the ebb has gone less astern than in this case." Olaf told them there need be no worry. "But I have noticed that there has been a gathering together of folk back up on land today, and the Irish seem to be concerned about the ship's coming ashore. Also I noticed today when the tide was out that there is a creek running in behind this headland, a river-mouth, and that out of this outlet the sea runs smooth and free all the while. Now, if our ship is not damaged, then we can put out our boat and tow our ship into the place." There was a clay bottom where they had been lying at anchor, and no plank had been sprung in their ship.

Olaf's crew shifted the ship over and cast anchor. But later in the day a great mass of people drifted down to the beach. Presently two men in a boat came out to the trading-vessel. They asked who was the ship's master. Olaf answered them, and in the Irish tongue, the same in which they had asked their questions. But so soon as the Irish found that they were Norwegians they called on them in the name of the law to turn over their goods; and in that case no hurt would be done them until the king had passed on their case. Olaf replied that such was the law if there were no interpreter with the traders; "But I can tell you quite truthfully that these are peaceable folk. And yet we are not going to give ourselves up without a struggle." Thereupon the Irish shouted their war-shout and waded out into the sea, to haul the ship out of the water with the crew aboard. It was no deeper than up to their armpits, or to the waist of the tallest of them; but the pool in which the ship

floated was too deep to touch bottom. Olaf called the men to arms and ordered them to fall in along the ship's rail, from stem to stern, in such close order that the shields overlapped all along the line. A spearhead stuck out under every shield-rim. Then Olaf took his place in the bows, and was armed in this fashion, that he wore a coat of mail and on his head a gold-worked helmet; he was girt with a sword of which the hilts were gold-inlaid; with a barbed spear in his hand, drawn from a grave-mound and bearing a potent inscription; a red shield covered him, on which was a lion drawn in gold. When the Irish saw their array, fear seized upon them, and it no longer looked like such easy booty as they had counted on.

So now the Irish fall back and run together into a crowd in a nearby village. Then presently there arose a great clamor among them. Now it seemed quite plain to them that this ship was a freebooter and that many more of the same kind were shortly to be looked for. So now they send word to the king, in all haste. This was an easy matter, for the king was just then on a progress a little way off. He came riding down straightway with a suite of men, down to where the ship lay. It was not farther from shore to where the ship lay afloat than so that men could easily call across to one another. Meantime the Irish had been making repeated onsets on them with shot-weapons, but Olaf and his men came to no harm by it. Olaf was standing in his place in these arms and accoutrements, as before was written; and men had much to say of how masterly was the bearing of this man who was the ship's master. But when Olaf's shipmates saw this great body of horsemen come riding down on them, and a very warlike array they were, then they fell silent, for it looked to them as if they had to do with heavy odds. But so soon as Olaf heard this muttering that ran through his company he told them

to bear up and take heart, "for now our case has taken a turn for the better. The Irish are saluting Myrkjartan, their king." They then rode down so near the ship that each could hear what the other said. The king asked who was the ship's master. Olaf told his own name, and asked who was this noble knight with whom he was speaking. The other replied, "I am called Myrkjartan." Olaf asked him, "Are you king of the Irish?" He said he was. Then the king asked Olaf the news of the day. Olaf made fair answer to all questions that were asked of him. Then the king asked from what place they had set out, and of what people they were. And further the king inquired particularly about Olaf's kin and connections. But inasmuch as the king found that this man stood on his dignity and gave answers to no more than he was asked, he pushed his questioning no farther for the time. Olaf told him, "I will tell you this much, that we put out from Norway, and that these men are of the court of King Harald Gunnhildarson, who are aboard with me. And there is this to tell you of my kin and connections, Sire, that my father is living in Iceland, and that his name is Höskuld and he is of high birth. Of my kinsfolk on my mother's side I believe you will have seen more than I. For my mother is named Melkorka, and it has been truthfully told to me that she is your own daughter, O King. And this it is that has brought me out on so long a voyage. And now I am much concerned to know what you will have to say to our present case." The king fell silent, and had some talk with his own men.

There were discreet men who questioned the king, what there might be to this tale which this man was telling. The king spoke and said, "It is plain to be seen that this Olaf is a man of good birth, whether he is one of our kinsfolk or not; and also that he speaks Irish as well as the best." Then the king stood up and spoke, "There is this answer to be given you for the time being,

that I grant peace and freedom to you and all your shipmates. But as touches this kinship which you reckon with us, of that you and I will have further talk before I can give you an answer." The gangplanks were then run ashore, and Olaf went on shore and his shipmates with him. And the Irish were much taken with the stately bearing of this man, and with his warlike appearance. Then Olaf saluted the king in all courtesy, and took off his helmet and bowed himself before the king. And the king took his greetings in all friendliness.

Presently after they had further talk together. And Olaf now brought up his errand and his tale anew, and spoke both long and to the point of what he had to say. He concluded by saying that he was then wearing on his hand the gold finger-ring which Melkorka had given him at parting in Iceland, "when she told me that you, King, had given it to her as a toothing-fee." The king took it in his hand and looked on the golden thing, and his face went red. In a while the king spoke again and said, "The tokens are true. But it is by no means less to be noticed that you bear so strong a resemblance to your mother that you are easily to be recognized by that alone. On these grounds, then, I am ready to own kinship with you, Olaf, with these men to witness who are here present and can hear what I am saying. This also, that I ask you to come home to my court with me, you and all your company. What favor you may all find there will depend on what your manhood may prove to be worth after I have seen more of you." The king then got them horses for riding and he set men to work to lay up their ship and stow away the rigging and care for the goods which they carried. After this the king rode on to Dublin; and all this seemed great tidings, that there came riding home with him the son of his daughter who had been carried off long ago by raiders at fifteen years old.

But it was after all Melkorka's nurse who was the most deeply touched by the tidings, and who was now bedridden, borne down with both grief and age. And yet that day she walked out staffless to meet Olaf. The king then told Olaf, "Here is Melkorka's nurse coming, and she will be sure to want to hear the news of her and her fortunes." Olaf met her with open arms and seated the old woman on his knees and told her that her nurseling was settled and doing well in Iceland. And Olaf then showed her the knife and belt, and the old woman knew the gifts; and she was moved to tears, and declared that the truth was both that Melkorka's son was a manly fellow and that he had a good right to be. The old woman was well and strong all through that winter.

The king spent but little time at home through the winter, for at that time there was continual raiding on the lands of the West. But the king beat off all vikings and freebooters that winter. Olaf took his place on the king's ship with all his company, and it was said that their band was a hard one to deal with for any who had to meet them. The king took Olaf and his followers into consultation in all his plans, inasmuch as he found that Olaf was both wise and forward in all those things that would show the quality of his manhood.

Now, when winter was drawing toward its end the king called a Thing of his people, and it was an uncommonly full meeting. The king stood up and spoke, and this is what he had to say, "It is known to you that there came a man here this last fall who is my daughter's son, and who is likewise of noble birth on his father's side. I have found Olaf to be so sound and able a man that his like is not to be had among us. Now it is my wish to tender him the kingship after my time, inasmuch as Olaf is better fit to be a ruler than my own sons." Olaf thanked him for this offer with much courtesy and

many fair words; but yet said he was not willing to take the chance of how patiently his sons would put up with it when Myrkjartan was gone; he said that "better is a brief honor than a long disgrace"; said he had made up his mind to set out for Norway so soon as the passage from shore to shore was to be made without risk; said also that his mother would have little to comfort her if he did not come back. The king let Olaf have it his way. After that the Thing broke up.

Now when Olaf was all ready to sail, then the king went down to the ship with him and made him a gift of a gold-chased spear and a jewelled sword and many other valuable things. Olaf begged leave to carry Melkorka's nurse away with him. The king said there was no need of it, and she went not. Olaf and his men then went aboard their ship, and they took leave of the king on the friendliest terms. Thereupon Olaf and his shipmates sailed out to sea. They had a good passage and reached Norway, and Olaf's cruise became quite famous. So now they laid up the ship. Olaf got horses and set out for King Harald's court with all his company.

XXII. Olaf returns to Iceland.

So Olaf Höskuldson now came back to King Harald's court, and the king received him courteously, but Gunnhild much more cordially. They asked him to be their guest and were at pains to use many fair words. Olaf accepted, and both Örn and he joined the king's court. The king and Gunnhild both made much of Olaf, so much so that no foreigner had ever been held in such honor by them. Olaf gave many rare gifts to the king and to Gunnhild, things of value which he had come by out west in Ireland. Harald gave Olaf at Yuletide full clothing cut out of scarlet satin. So Olaf spent the winter quietly, and when the spring was passing the king and Olaf had some talk together. Olaf asked the king's leave to go out to Iceland during the summer, "I have noble kinsfolk to visit out there," said he. The king said, "It would be more to my humor to have you make your home here with me, and to accept such a position here as may best please you in all respects." Olaf thanked the king for this honor which he offered him, but went on to say that he still was bent on going to Iceland, if that were not against the king's will. Then said the king, "It is not that I would cross you in all this, Olaf. Go you shall out to Iceland this summer, for I see that your heart is all set on it. But you are to go to no toil or trouble about getting ready. I will take care of that." And therewith their talk ended. King Harald had a ship brought out when spring came. It was a trading-

vessel,[1] and it was both a large ship and a good one. This vessel the king freighted with timber and fitted out complete with all necessary tackle. And when the ship was ready for the sea the king called Olaf in and said to him, "This will be your own ship, Olaf. I am not willing to let you sail out of Norway this summer as another man's passenger." Olaf thanked the king with fair words for his bounty. Olaf then got ready to set out; and so soon as he was ready and the wind favored, then Olaf sailed out to sea. And King Harald and Olaf took leave of one another with the greatest affection.

Olaf had favorable winds that summer. He brought his ship to land in the Hrutafjord, at Bordeyri. The ship's coming was quickly noised about, and so also who was its master. Höskuld learned of his son Olaf's coming home and was very much pleased, and he set out right away and rode up north into Hrutafjord with a few men. It was a joyful meeting between father and son. Höskuld asked Olaf to come home with him. He accepted. Olaf laid up his ship and his goods were carried down home from the north. And when these things had been duly cared for, Olaf rode down from the north with a company of twelve, and home to Höskuldstadir. Höskuld welcomed his son kindly. His brothers, too, welcomed him in all kindliness, and all his kinsfolk. Still the closest friendship was between Bárd and him. Olaf gained renown from this cruise. Then was Olaf's kinship also made known, that he was a daughter's-son of Myrkjartan, the king of the Irish. This was told throughout the country, and with it the honors which notable men had bestowed upon him, whose guest he had been. Olaf had also brought goods out with him to a

[1] The merchant ship (*Knörr*) was quite a different boat from the raiding-ship of the pirates (*Snekkia* or *Langskip*), broader beam, deeper draught, and higher freeboard.

large amount. And so now he passed the winter at home with his father.

Melkorka came over right soon to see her son. Olaf met her with all tenderness. She had many questions to ask about things in Ireland. First about her father and then her other folks. Olaf had an answer for all that she asked. Soon she asked if her nurse were still living. Olaf said she was, indeed. Melkorka then asked him why he had not been willing to give her the pleasure of bringing her nurse with him to Iceland. And Olaf told her, "There were those who did not think best, Mother, that I carry your nurse away out of Ireland." "It may be so," said she. But it was plain to be seen that this was a sore disappointment to her. Thorbjörn and Melkorka had a son, and his name was Lambi. He was a large man and a stout one, and was much like his father both in looks and in temper.

Now, when Olaf had been in Iceland over winter and spring was coming on, his father and he had a talk together about their concerns. "What I should like, Olaf," said Höskuld, "would be to have a suitable marriage arranged for you and that you should then take over your foster-father's property at Goddastadir. There is still a good deal of property there. And you could then put the place in shape and manage it, with my help." But Olaf said, "I have not been thinking much of all that, so far. And I don't know where there is a woman sitting whom it would be much of a piece of luck for me to get. You will doubtless understand that I should be looking well toward the front in all this matter of a marriage. And I am quite sure that you have not brought this matter up until you had made up your mind where the choice is to fall." Höskuld replied, "You are quite right. There is a certain man by the name of Egil. He is a son of Skalla-Grim. He is living at Borg, in the Borgarfjord. Egil has a daughter whose name is Thor-

gerd. This is the woman whom I have a mind to ask to marry you. For this is the best match in all the Borgarfjord country, or even farther afield. And then, too, it is likely that such a connection with the Myrafolk would stand you in good stead." Olaf said, "I am ready to follow your advice, and leave it to you; and, indeed, this match will be quite to my mind if it can be brought about; but you will have to bear in mind that in case this proposal is brought up and nothing comes of it, I will not like it." Höskuld said, "Then we may expect to take this matter in hand." Olaf said he was leaving it to him. So time passes and the meeting of the Thing has come. Höskuld sets out from home, and rides with a great company. His son Olaf goes with him. They set up their booth. There was a large gathering of people. Egil Skallagrimson was at the meeting. All those who saw Olaf remarked what a handsome man he was and masterful. He was well decked out with weapons and clothing.

XXIII. Olaf's courtship and marriage.

They say that Höskuld and Olaf, father and son together, went out from their booth one day to look for Egil. Egil greeted them cordially, for Höskuld and he had a good deal of a speaking-acquaintance. Now Höskuld brought up their suit in Olaf's behalf and sued for Thorgerd's hand in marriage. She too was at the Thing meeting. Egil was well inclined to the proposal; said he had heard only good reports of them, both father and son; "and I am also well aware, Höskuld, that you are a man of gentle birth and highly regarded; and Olaf is renowned for this cruise which he has made, and it is no wonder if such men as he fix their hopes well to the front, for he lacks neither good birth nor good looks. And yet all this will have to be left to Thorgerd herself, inasmuch as it is for no man to come by Thorgerd without her own consent." Höskuld said, "I will then ask you, Egil, to consult with your daughter about this matter." Egil said he would do so. So Egil went out to see his daughter, and they talked things over. Egil said, "There is a man by the name of Olaf, and who is a Höskuldson, and he is just now quite a famous man. His father Höskuld has come to me with a proposal of marriage in Olaf's behalf and is suing for your hand. I have referred the matter to you. So now I want to know your answer. To me it would seem that it should come easy to find an answer to such a proposal, for this is an extremely good match." Thorgerd answered him, "I have heard you say that you loved me the best of your children; but

now it seems to me that you are giving the lie to all that if you want to marry me off to a son of a slave-girl, even if he is handsome and showily decked out." Egil said, "You are scarcely as shrewd about this as about other things. Have you not learned that he is a daughter's-son of Myrkjartan, the king of the Irish? He is of much better birth on his mother's side than on his father's, and yet that would be quite good enough for us." Thorgerd was not to be moved by all this. So their talk ended in something of a disagreement.

The next following day Egil went to Höskuld's booth, and Höskuld made him welcome. They took up their talk again. Höskuld asks how their suit has been getting on. Egil had little to say of it. He told all that had taken place. Höskuld said it looked very doubtful, "and yet I think you have done right." Olaf was not with them at this time. Presently Egil went away. Now Olaf came in to ask how the proposition of marriage was coming on. Höskuld said it looked quite doubtful, so far as she had the say. Olaf then told him, "Now it is as I told you before, that I should not like it if I got a discourteous answer. You had the most to say when this matter was first taken up. Now I will see to it that it will not be allowed to drop where it is. There is truth in what is said, that 'delegated business goes to the wolves.' And now we will be going right away to Egil's booth." Höskuld told him to have it his own way.

Olaf was decked out in this fashion, that he was dressed in the scarlet satin clothes which King Harald had given him; he wore a gold-inlaid helmet, and carried a jewelled sword in his hand, which King Myrkjartan had given him. So now Höskuld and Olaf together take their way to Egil's booth. Höskuld goes first, but Olaf follows him close. Egil makes them welcome, and Höskuld sits down beside him, but Olaf remained standing and looked about him. He saw where

a woman was sitting on the raised bench of the booth. She was a beautiful woman, with a lordly air, and very well dressed. He felt sure that this must be Thorgerd, Egil's daughter. Olaf goes up to the dais and sits down beside her. Thorgerd greeted this man and asked who he might be. Olaf gave his own name and his father's. "May be you think the slave-girl's son is growing overbold if he dares to sit down beside you and means to talk to you." Thorgerd answered him, "You are perhaps thinking that you believe yourself to have done more daring deeds than just to talk to women." After this they fell to talking together, and they kept at it the rest of the day. No one overheard their talk. But before they left off, Egil and Höskuld were called in. Olaf's suit was then taken under advisement anew. Thorgerd then leaves it all to her father. So then the suit was easily won, and pledges were exchanged forthwith. Precedence was given the Laxdalers, inasmuch as the woman was to be brought home to them. The wedding was arranged to take place at Höskuldstadir, seven weeks before the end of summer. So then Egil and Höskuld took leave of one another, and father and son rode away home to Höskuldstadir, and spent the summer at home; and all is quiet.

Presently things were made ready for the feast at Höskuldstadir. No expense was spared, and the means were plentiful. The invited guests came on the day bespoken. The Borgarfjord folk were very many. Egil was there, and his son Thorstein. The bride, too, came with them, and a select company from the countryside. So also Höskuld had gathered a large company of guests to receive them. The feast was a great and bounteous one. The guests were taken leave of with gifts. At that time Olaf gave the sword Myrkjartan's-Gift to Egil; and Egil was all smiles at the gift. No tidings befell. And so the folk went home.

XXIV. The building of Hjardarholt; Hrapp's ghost finally laid.

Olaf and Thorgerd were living at Höskuldstadir and they came to love one another dearly. It was plain to be seen by all men that she was an able and high-tempered woman, but not meddlesome in everyday concerns. But that thing would be put through which Thorgerd set her heart on, whatever it might be that she took a hand in. This winter Olaf and Thorgerd spent at Höskuldstadir or at his foster-father's, by turns. In the spring Olaf took over the property at Goddastadir. The following summer Thord Goddi was taken ill with a sickness which ended with his death. Olaf raised a mound over him on the headland that runs out into the Laxá and is called Drafnarnes. There is a farmstead close by which is called Haugsgard. From this time on men began to draw together about Olaf on all sides, and he grew to be a great chieftain. And Höskuld did not begrudge it, inasmuch as he ever wished to have Olaf called into consultation in all weighty concerns. The estate which Olaf owned was the largest and best property in all Laxárdal. There were two brothers in Olaf's service, both named Án, one being known as Án the White and the other Black Án. A third was Beinir the Strong. They were servingmen of Olaf's, and all of them were bold and trusty men. Thorgerd and Olaf had a daughter named Thurid.

The lands which Hrapp had owned were lying waste, as was before written. They seemed to Olaf to be lying

convenient to his hand, and he talked the matter over with his father on a certain occasion, that they would do well to send someone to speak to Trefil and let him know that Olaf would like to buy the lands of Hrappstadir from him, together with any other possessions included in the estate. This was easily arranged, and the sale was bound with a formal bargain, for Trefil could see that "better for him was one crow in the hand than two in the wood." The bargain between them was that Olaf was to pay three marks of silver for the lands; yet this was after all not a fair price, for the lands were wide and fair and very productive, and attached to them were valuable salmon fisheries and seal fisheries, besides large woodlands.

A little farther up than Höskuldstadir lies, on the north of the Laxá river, there had been cut a clearing in the woodland, which lay near to the grazing-grounds; so that Olaf's stock habitually gathered there at all seasons, in good weather and bad. On a certain autumn Olaf had farm buildings put up in this same clear space; built of the timber that had been cut in these woods, helped out in part with driftwood which he gathered on his beaches. This farmstead was large and sightly. The houses were left vacant over winter. Olaf moved in there the following spring. But before doing so he had all his stock rounded up, and it had now grown to be a great number; for no man in all Breidafjord was at that time wealthier in livestock than he. Then he sent word to his father, asking him to take a stand out-of-doors, where he could view his passing on his way to this new homestead and could say a word of good omen for him. Höskuld promised to do so. Olaf now makes ready. He let the sheep go on ahead, as they were the shyest and fleetest; then the milch cattle came next after; then the younger cattle were turned loose; the pack-horses came on with the last. There were men set to

ride with these cattle and keep them moving on a straight trail all along the line. And the head of the drive had reached the new farmyard by the time when Olaf rode out of the yard at Goddastadir, and there was no break in the line between. Höskuld was standing out-of-doors together with the other folks on the place. Then Höskuld spoke up, and wished his son Olaf a good and happy home-coming to this new habitation of his. "And it comes forcibly into my mind that this will come to pass, and that his name will long be kept alive." Jorunn the housewife spoke up and said, "Has this slave-girl's son riches enough so that his name is to be remembered?"

It was about the time the farmhands had taken the pack saddles off the horses when Olaf rode into the farmyard. Then he spoke and said, "Now I will put a patch on the curiosity of those folks who have been guessing all this past winter as to what this farm is to be called. Its name will be Hjardarholt." This seemed a happy choice, in view of what had just taken place. So now Olaf sets up housekeeping at Hjardarholt. It very soon came to be a lordly estate; complete at all points. Now Olaf's standing advanced greatly. Many things worked together to that outcome. Olaf was popular above all men, for whatever share he took upon himself in men's affairs the outcome ever pleased all concerned. His father, too, backed him up strongly. And he found it much to his advantage to have married into the family of the Myrafolk. Olaf was held to be the greatest of Höskuld's sons.

During this first winter which Olaf spent at Hjardarholt he kept a large household and many workmen. The work was portioned out among the farmhands. One had the care of the dry cattle; another of the milch-cows. The stables were in a piece of woodland some little way from the house. On a certain evening the man who took care of the dry cattle came to Olaf and asked him to

find another man to tend the cattle, "and give me something else to do." Olaf said, "I want you to go on with the same work that you have had." He said he would rather quit and go away. "You have some fault to find, then?" said Olaf. "Now I will go with you this evening when you stall the cattle and if there turns out to be anything wrong about it, then I will not hold you to account. Otherwise you are likely to be worse off in one way or another." Olaf picks up the gold-wrought gift-spear of the king. He then leaves the house and the workman with him. There was a light snow on the ground. So they come to the stable, and that was open. Olaf told the man to go inside, "and I will drive the cattle into the stable to you, and you tie them in." The workman went as far as the stable door. The first Olaf knew, the man came tumbling back into his arms. Olaf asked him what he was up to. He replied, "Hrapp is standing in the stable door and reached out for me. But I have had enough of wrestling-matches with him already." Olaf then went forward into the doorway and laid at him with the spear. Hrapp gripped the spear-shank with both hands and bent it to one side so that the spear shaft broke off short. Olaf then tried to rush in on him, but Hrapp went right down into the ground where he had been standing. So they parted. Olaf had the shaft and Hrapp had the spearhead. After this Olaf and his man finished tying in the cattle and then went home. Olaf then told the farmhand that he would not hold this talking of his against him. Next morning Olaf left home and went to the place where Hrapp had been buried under a heap of stones, and set men to digging. Hrapp was found still unrotted. There Olaf found his spear. After that he had a funeral pyre made. Hrapp was burned on the pyre, and his ashes were carried out to sea. From that time forth no man was molested by Hrapp's walking again.

XXV. Of Höskuld's sons and of Hrut's quarrel with Höskuld.

Now there is something to be told of Höskuld's sons. Höskuld's son Thorleik had been the guest of many gentlefolk at the time when he was running on trading-voyages before he settled down at home, and he was looked upon as a very notable man. He had also sailed with the vikings on piratical raids and had acquitted himself as a thoroughly manly fellow. Bárd Höskuldson, too, had sailed as a trader, and he was thought well of wherever he went, for he was a thorough man of honor and a temperate man in all things. Bárd married, and got a wife of the Breidafjord folks, named Astrid. She was of a good family. A son of Bárd's was named Thorarin, and his daughter Gudny, who married Hall, son of Viga-Styr. From them has come a long line of descendants.

Hrut Herjolfson gave a certain slave of his by the name of Hrolf his freedom, and with it he gave him some small property and a spot of ground for a homestead, next the boundary between Höskuld's lands and his own. Indeed the boundary was so close in that Hrut's folks had even overshot the mark and set the freedman down on land that belonged to Höskuld. Here he very shortly had bred himself rich in livestock. This went much against the grain with Höskuld, that he had set his freedman down here, right about his ears. He called on the freedman to pay him for the ground which he was

living on, "for it is my property." The freedman went to Hrut and told him all that had been said between them. Hrut told him to never mind, and pay nothing. "Höskuld does not know," said he, "who has owned this piece of ground." So he goes home and goes on living on his place just as before. After a little, Thorleik Höskuldson, by the advice of his father, took a few men with him and went to the freedman's place and took him and killed him, and Thorleik took over, in his own and his father's name, all the property which the freedman had got together. Hrut heard of all this and he took it quite ill, he and his sons. Many of them were grown men, and that parcel of kinsmen looked quite formidable. Hrut took legal advice on this matter, what had best be done about it, and when the case had been inquired into by the Lawman, the upshot of it was little to Hrut's liking. Much was made of the point that Hrut had settled the freedman without leave on ground belonging to Höskuld, where he had bred his livestock. So that Thorleik had killed him on ground belonging to himself and his father. Hrut was quite sore about it. Soon afterward Thorleik built up a farm next the boundary line between Hrut's and Höskuld's lands; and the place is called At Kambsnes. Thorleik lived there for a while, as has been spoken of before. Thorleik had a son by his wife. This boy was affused with water and given a name and called Bolli. He was an uncommonly fine man from early youth.

XXVI. Höskuld's death.

Höskuld Dala-Kolsson was taken with a sickness in his old age. He sent for his sons and his other kinsfolk and friends, and when they came Höskuld spoke to the two brothers, Bárd and Thorleik, and said, "I have taken something of a sickness. I have not been of a sickly habit. Now, as you both know, you two are my legitimate children and rightful heirs to my property after my day. But there is a third son of mine who was not born in wedlock. Now I will ask you two brothers to let Olaf be brought into the inheritance and let him come in for a one-third share with you." Bárd was the first to answer, and he said that in this matter he was willing to do as his father wished, "for I count on Olaf to do me all the more honor the richer he is." Then Thorleik spoke up and said, "I am very far from willing to have Olaf brought in as legal heir. Olaf has plenty of property already. And you, Father, have helped him along with large gifts out of your own, and you have for a long time past showed an unfair partiality between us brothers. It is not for me wilfully to give up the share of honor to which I am born." Then Höskuld said, "You two will at least not deny me my legal rights, to give twelve ounces to a son of mine, and one who is of as good a family on his mother's side as Olaf is." Thorleik gave his consent to this. Thereupon Höskuld called for the gold ring given him by King Hákon; this weighed a mark; together with the King's gift-sword, which came

to one-half mark of gold.[1] These he bestowed on his son Olaf, and therewith his own good luck and that of the family; saying that he spoke in this way not because he had any doubt of its having already passed to him. Olaf accepted the heirlooms and remarked that he would have to take chances of Thorleik's liking it or not. He did take it ill, and considered that Höskuld had got the better of him by sharp practice. But Olaf told him, "I shall not let the heirlooms go, Thorleik. For you gave your consent before witnesses to a gift of that value. I shall have to take chances of keeping them." Bárd said he would abide by his father's disposal of the matter.

Shortly after this, Höskuld died. This came as a great loss, in the first place to his sons, but also to all his kinsfolk and their friends and connections. His sons raised a worthy grave-mound to his memory. There was but little treasure buried in the mound with him. When these things were finished the brothers talked over the matter of a funeral feast in memory of their father, for such was the custom in those times. Then Olaf spoke up and said, "It seems to me that we shall not be ready with this banquet right soon if it is to be made such a memorable feast as our good name would seem to call for. The fall is already far gone, and it will be no small matter to supply what is wanted. Also it is likely to look like something of a hardship for such of the folks as live at a distance to come so far in the fall of the year. It is fairly to be counted on that many would not be coming of those whom we most wish to see here. Now I will

[1] This makes a total of 12 ounces of gold. This amounts to a fraud. The *eyrir* used as a unit of value is an ounce of silver. But it is also a unit of weight. By a subreption 12 ounces of gold are here substituted for 12 ounces of silver. The ratio of value between gold and silver at the time was something like eight to one, or ten to one.

undertake to invite the folks to this feast at the Thing-meeting next summer, and I will bear one third of the cost of the banquet." To this the brothers agreed, and Olaf then went home. Thorleik and Bárd divided the property between them. Bárd came in for the home place; because the greater number preferred to have it that way; for he was the more popular of the two. Thorleik came in for the greater share of the chattels. As between the two brothers, Olaf and Bárd, all was well and kindly, but there was something of an ugly feeling between Olaf and Thorleik. So now the following winter goes by and summer comes and the time of the Thing is at hand. Höskuld's sons then made ready and set out to the Thing. It very shortly appeared that Olaf was by all means the foremost of the brothers and took the lead. And when they reached the Thing they set up their booth and ordered their affairs in good and mannerly fashion.

XXVII. Olaf adopts Bolli Thorleikson as a foster-child.

It is told how that on a certain day, when men were gathering at the Law-Stone, Olaf stands up and calls for a hearing and tells them in the first place of his father's decease. "There are now here present many men, his kinsmen and friends. Now, it is the wish of my brothers that I am to bid you to a funeral feast in memory of our father Höskuld, all of you who are Godordsmen[1]; for it will be true that nearly all those of the better sort will have been bound to him by ties of blood or marriage. I will also say that no one shall go away giftless, of those who are men of consequence. So also we are inviting all freeholders, and all others who will accept, rich and poor, to come to a fortnight's banquet at Höskuldstadir, at ten weeks before the beginning of winter." And when Olaf closed his address there was loud applause, and this whole thing was made much of, as a magnificent

[1] Originally, in pagan times, the functions of the *Goði* were primarily of a shamanistic or quasi-priestly sort. To these there came to be added certain secular duties, connected with the local and seasonal folk-motes. Later, with the advent of Christianity, the magical and religious functions lapsed. The text is written in Christian times and with the Christian perspective. The *Goðorð*—the office or dignity of *Goði*—had become hereditary, but it was also otherwise transmissible, and, indeed, vendible. A godordsman would be a substantial citizen, and presumably a man of large means. The great political bosses of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were commonly incumbents of one or more, sometimes fractional, godords, by inheritance, purchase, or proxy.

affair. When Olaf got back home to the booth he told his brothers of this arrangement. They did not take to it much. They thought it overdone. After the Thing the brothers rode back home.

So the summer passed. The brothers duly made ready for the feast. Olaf put in his share of a full third part and the feast was furnished with the best of everything. Large provision was made for this funeral feast, for it was expected that a great number of guests would come. And when the feast came on it is said that nearly all those men of any consequence came to it who had accepted the invitation. The number of guests was so large that it is commonly said and believed that they were not short of nine hundred.[1] This has been the second largest banquet, in point of numbers, that has been had on Iceland; the largest being the funeral feast given by the Hjaltasons in memory of their father, where there were twelve hundred (1440) guests present. This funeral feast was a most magnificent one in all respects, and it brought great renown to the three brothers, and most of all to Olaf. Olaf met both his brothers half-way in the giving of gifts; and gifts were given to all the best people.

Now, when the greater number of the guests were gone, Olaf went to his brother Thorleik for a talk and said to him, "It so happens, as you are aware, my brother, that we have not been right good friends. Now I would like to say a word for the bettering of our friendship. I know it has annoyed you that I took the gift of heirlooms which my father gave me at the time of his death. Now, if you still feel that you were put upon in this matter, I am willing to do so much to please you that I will undertake to foster your son; and he is ever counted the lesser man who fosters another's child." Thorleik took it in good part and said, as indeed was true, that this offer

[1] 1080; the hundred is here as elsewhere the long-hundred of 120.

was an honorable one. So now Olaf takes Thorleik's son Bolli home with him. He was then three years old. They parted as the best of friends, and Bolli went home to Hjardarholt with Olaf. Thorgerd received him kindly. Bolli grew up in their household and they made no less of him than of their own children.

XXVIII. Of Olaf's children.

Olaf and Thorgerd had a son. This boy was affused with water and given a name. And he was named for Myrkjartan, Olaf's maternal grandfather. Bolli and Kjartan were much of an age. They had also other children. Their sons were named Steinthor and Haldor and Helgi, and Höskuld was the name of Olaf's youngest son. Bergthora was the name of a daughter of Olaf's and Thorgerd's, and Thorbjörg was another. All their children promised well as they were growing up. At this time Holmgöngu-Bersi [1] was living in Saurbæ (Dirtyby) on the farm called Tunga. He came to Olaf and asked to adopt Olaf's son Haldor as his foster-child. Olaf agreed to this, and Haldor went home with him. He was then a year old. Bersi was taken sick that summer and was bedridden for a good part of the summer. It is told that on a certain day, while the folks at Tunga were at work making hay, Haldor and Bersi were left alone indoors. Haldor was lying in a cradle. The cradle upset with the boy and he tumbled out on the floor. Bersi was unable to get to him. Then Bersi chanted this ditty:

Liggjum báðir i lama-sessi,
Haldor ok ék höfum eingin þrek.
Veldr elli mér en æska þer.
þat batnar þér en þeigi mér.[2]

[1] Bersi the Duellist; a son of Höskuld's sister.

[2] Both of us are lying on the couch of infirmity,
Haldor and I, we have no force.
Age does for me and youth for thee.
'Twill mend with thee but not with me.

After a while someone came in and picked Haldor up off the floor, and Bersi got better. Haldor grew up on the place, and he grew to be a large and robust man. Kjartan Olafson grew up at home at Hjardarholt. He was the most beautiful of all men that have been born in Iceland. He was full-featured and fair of face, with the most beautiful eyes, and a blond complexion. He had long hair, and fine as silk, falling in locks; a tall man and of great strength, much after the fashion of Egil, his mother's father, or of his uncle Thorolf. Kjartan was a man of uncommonly pleasing figure and carriage, so much so that everyone who saw him was struck with wonder and admiration. He was also more skilled at arms than almost any other man. He was a cunning and dextrous workman with tools and an uncommonly good swimmer. He greatly surpassed all others in all manner of manly sports. He was of all men the most unassuming, gentle and kindly, so that every child loved him. He was of a merry temper, debonair and open-handed. Olaf loved Kjartan the best of all his children. His foster-brother Bolli was also a large man. He came next after Kjartan in all feats of strength and courage. He was a strong man and fair to look upon, well-mannered and of a notably warlike bearing, much given to fine clothes and weapons. The two foster-brothers were fond of each other. So now Olaf is sitting at home on his estate while years come and go.

XXIX. Olaf goes to Norway for house-timber; Thurid's marriage.

One spring Olaf informed Thorgerd that he was thinking of going abroad; "and I want you to take care of house and home." Thorgerd told him she had no great mind for it, but Olaf said he would have it so anyway. So he bought him a ship which had been laid up over the winter out west at the Vadil. Olaf set sail that summer and brought his ship to land in Hördaland. In this place, a little way back up from the shore, lived a man by the name of Geirmund Gnyr (Geirmund the Grumbler); a mighty man and rich, and a great viking. An ill-tempered and contentious man he was, but he had now settled down and was attached to the court of Earl Hákon the Great. Geirmund came down to meet the ship and very soon struck up an acquaintance with Olaf, for he knew of him by report. Geirmund asked Olaf to come home with him as his guest with as many of his men as he wished to bring. Olaf accepted, and took lodgings with him, together with five men of the ship's company. The rest of Olaf's crew found lodgings here and there about Hördaland. Geirmund entertained Olaf well. It was a large and fine farmstead, with a numerous household, and there was a merry time during the winter.

When the winter was getting late Olaf told Geirmund what was the business on which he had come; that he was looking for house-timber. And he added that he was much concerned to find choice timber. Geirmund told him, "Earl Hákon owns the very finest of forests, and

I am quite sure that if you go to see him it will be placed at your disposal; for the earl is in the habit of doing favors to men of less quality than you, Olaf, if they come to see him." So when spring came Olaf made ready and set out to see Earl Hákon. The earl received him with marked courtesy and asked Olaf to be his guest for as long a time as he would like. Olaf told the earl what was the occasion of his coming, "I have come to beg of you, Sire, that you will lease us your timber-land to cut house-timber." "That you shall quite freely have, even though you were to freight your ship with such timber as we will make you a present of. For I am thinking that it is not every day that such men as you come to see us out of Iceland." And on taking leave of him the earl gave him a gold-wrought axe; and it was a keepsake of high value and quality. They then took leave of each other with the greatest affection.

Geirmund had quietly leased his lands and was planning to go out to Iceland that summer in Olaf's ship. This he concealed from everybody. Olaf knew nothing of it until Geirmund brought his goods down to Olaf's ship; and it was goods to a very large value. Olaf told him, "You would not be going on my ship if I had known of it sooner, for I believe there are those on Iceland who would be better off never to see you. But now, seeing that you are already here with all these goods, I don't care to chase you back home like a house-dog." Geirmund replied, "I am not going to be left behind even if you do take something of a high tone, for I have made up my mind to be allowed to go as your passenger." So Olaf and his ship's company went aboard and sailed out to sea. They met favorable winds, and put into Breidafjord. They ran their gangplanks ashore in the mouth of the Laxá. Olaf had the timber carried ashore and laid up the ship in the shed which his father had built. Olaf asked Geirmund home with him.

That summer Olaf built a dwelling-house at Hjardarholt, larger and better than any that men had seen. Famous old legends were set forth on the wainscoting and also on the roof-timbers. It was of such excellent workmanship that the whole seemed even more sightly when the tapestries were not hung. Geirmund was not a companionable fellow everyday, rather unfriendly with most folks. He wore habitually a red kirtle of brocade below and a gray fur cloak over it, with a bear-skin cap on his head. He carried a sword. It was a great weapon, and there was no silver work about it, but the blade was sharp and wide and spotless. This sword he called Fotbit, and he never let it go out of his hands. Geirmund had been there but a little while before he fell in love with Thurid, Olaf's daughter. He opened his suit to Olaf, but he gave him a refusal. Then Geirmund made valuable presents to Thorgerd, with a view to winning his suit. She took the valuables, for there was nothing small about it. Presently Thorgerd brought up this proposal to Olaf. She also gave her own opinion, that their daughter could not well be married to better advantage; "for he is a bold and capable man, rich and generous." Then said Olaf, "I will no more cross you in this than in anything else, although I had rather have married off Thurid to another man." Thorgerd goes her way and is well content with her business. She told Geirmund how matters stood now. He thanked her for her kind words and for her help and her good backing. Geirmund now opened his suit to Olaf a second time, and now it all came easy. Thereupon Geirmund was betrothed to Thurid, and the wedding fixed for the late winter at Hjardarholt. The wedding was a very large gathering, for the new house was then finished.

At this wedding Ulf Uggason was present, and he had made a ballad about Olaf Höskuldson and about the legends that were inscribed on the walls of the house, and

this he brought out at the wedding. This poem is called the *Hus-Drâþa*[1] and is well done. Olaf rewarded him handsomely for the poem. He also gave large gifts to all the gentle-folk who had been his guests. Olaf got much renown from this wedding feast.

[1] House-Encomium.

XXX. Of Geirmund's desertion and the curse on the stolen sword.

THERE was not much affection in the married life of Geirmund and Thurid, and it was much the same on the part of both. Three winters did Geirmund stay with Olaf, until he wanted to get away and made the fact known; also that Thurid was to stay behind, together with their daughter Gro. This girl was then a year old. But Geirmund was not willing to leave any property behind. Mother and daughter took this very much to heart, and they told Olaf about it. But Olaf then had to say, "How is it now, Thorgerd? Is not the Norwegian just as generous now as he was that fall when he begged the young woman of you in marriage?" They got nowhere with Olaf, for he was in all things a man of peace and compromise. He also said the little girl had best be left behind until she should find some suitable means of going. But when they came to parting, Olaf gave Geirmund his trading-vessel. And he then got the ship ready and thanked him as he ought, and said it was a lordly gift. He sailed out of the Laxá rivermouth with a light northeast breeze, but the wind died down by the time they got as far out as the Islands. So they lay by at Oxney for a fortnight, unable to get away.

At this time Olaf had an errand away from home to look after the driftwood on his beaches. Then presently his daughter Thurid called up some of the workmen and had them go with her. She also took with her the little

girl. There were ten of them altogether. She had them put out a lugger belonging to Olaf. Thurid told them to make for the outer waters of the Hvammsfjord, by oar and sail; and when they got out to the Islands she had them launch a skiff carried by the lugger. Thurid got into the skiff, and two men with her, and told those who were left behind to take care of the lugger till she got back. She took the little girl in her arms and told them to row across the channel to where they would find the ship. She picked up an auger out of the boat and handed it to one of her men and told him to get into the ships-boat of the trading-vessel and bore holes in it so as to make it useless in case they had to take to it in a hurry. Then she had them put her ashore, and she still carried the little girl in her arms. This was about sunrise. She went out across the gangplank. All the men aboard were asleep. She went to the berth in which Geirmund was sleeping. The sword Fotbit was hanging from the timbers to which the hammock was slung. Thurid then put the little Gro in Geirmund's hammock and picked up Fotbit and took it along. After that she got off the ship and back to her company. Now the little girl began to cry. At this Geirmund awoke and sat up and saw the child, and he guessed right away what it was all about. He jumped up and reached for the sword, and missed it of course. Then he got to the rail and saw them rowing away. Geirmund called out his men and told them to get into the boat and row after them. So they did, and when they had got started they find that the sea is pouring in on them, and so they turned back to the ship. Then Geirmund called to Thurid and told her to come back and bring him Fotbit, his sword, "and get your girl; and take as much goods along with her as you like." Thurid said, "You like that better than not to get your hands on the sword, do you?" Geirmund answered her, "Much else would I let go before

I am content to lose the sword." "Then you will never get it back," said she. "You have done many mean things to us. We two are going to part now." Then Geirmund called to her and said, "No good will come to you for taking the sword with you." She replied that she would take the chance of all that. "This, then, do I promise you," said Geirmund, "that this sword will be the death of that man among your kin whose death will be the heaviest loss, and that it will come to pass in the most shameful fashion." Then Thurid went back home to Hjardarholt. Olaf too had got home by this time, and had no good to say of her doings. Still, there was nothing done about it. Thurid gave the sword Fotbit to her cousin Bolli, for she was no less fond of him than of her own brothers. Bolli carried this sword for a long time after. By this time Geirmund got a favorable wind. They put to sea and reached Norway in the fall. They sailed into the breakers on a certain night, outside of Stad. There Geirmund lost his life, and all his ship and crew with him. And that is all there is to tell of Geirmund.

XXXI. Of Olaf's daughters and of his bullock Harri.

Olaf Höskuldson was now sitting at home on his estate, in honor and renown, as before was written. Gudmund Sölmundarson was the name of a certain man who lived at Asbjarnarnes, in the Vididal up north. This Gudmund was a rich man. He wooed Thurid, and got her with a rich dowry. Thurid was a woman of wit and sense, somewhat overbearing, capable and active. Hall was the name of a son of theirs, and Bardi, Stein and Steingrim. Gudrun and Olöf were their daughters. Olaf's daughter Thorbjörg was an uncommonly handsome woman and rather stout. She was called Big Thorbjörg, and had been married into the West, in the Vatzfjord, to Ásgeir Svartarson. He was a man of good family. They had a son by the name of Kjartan, father of Thorvald, father of Thord, father of Snorri, father of Thorvald. From them are come the Vatzfjord kindred. Later on Thorbjörg was married to Vermund Thorgrimson. They had a daughter named Thorfinna, who was the wife of Thorstein Kuggason. Olaf's daughter Bergthora was married into the West, in Djupafjord, to Thorhall the Godi. Their son was Kjartan, father of Smid-Sturla, who was the foster-father of Thord Gilsson.

Olaf the Peacock owned many valuable animals. He had a fine ox, named Harri, of a dapple-gray color, larger than other cattle. He had four horns, two of

which were large and well-formed, but a third one stood straight up and the fourth stood out from his forehead and bent down below his eyes. This last one he used as an ice-pick to open the frozen watering-pools. He pawed the snow as horses do. During a certain very hard winter, when many cattle were lost for want of forage, he went out of Hjardarholt with sixteen head of cattle, and led them to the place now called Harrastadir, in the Breidafjord valley, and found grass for them all; and in the spring he led them in on the pasture land of Hjardarholt at the place called Harrabol. When Harri was eighteen years old his ice-pick horn dropped off, and the following fall Olaf had him slaughtered. During the night next following Olaf dreamed that a woman came to him. She was big and fierce. She spoke and asked him, "Are you sleeping?" He said he was awake. But the woman told him: "You are asleep. And yet it will be all the same. You have done my son to death and sent him home to me shamefully mishandled. For this you will one day see your own son lying in his blood, all through my doing. And, indeed, I will pick out the one which I know you hold the dearest." Therewith she disappeared. Olaf woke up, and it seemed to him that he caught a glimpse of the woman. Olaf was much concerned about the dream, and he told his friends about it, but it was never read in such a way as he would like to have it. He liked best to believe those who made out that it was nothing but a dream-hoax that had come before him.

XXXII. Of Osvif Helgason and his folks.

THERE was a certain man by the name of Osvif, who was a son of Helgi, son of Ottar, son of Björn the Norwegian, son of Ketil Flatnef, son of Björn Buna. This Osvif's mother was named Midbjörg, her mother Kadlin, a daughter of Göngu-Hrolf, son of Öxna-Thori. He [Öxna-Thori] was a *hersir* of high degree back east in the countryside of Vik. He was so called because he owned three islands with eighty oxen on each one. He made a present of one of the islands with its oxen to King Harald; and this gift became very famous. Osvif was a wise and learned man. He was living at Laugar, in the Sælingsdal. The farm of Laugar lies south of the Sælingsdal river, over against Tunga. His wife was Thordis, daughter of Thjodolf the Short. Ospak was their eldest son, the second Helgi, third Vandrád, fourth Torrád, fifth Thorolf. They were all able-bodied men. Gudrun was their daughter. She was the goodliest of all women that were then growing up in Iceland, both in looks and in wits. Gudrun was a woman of taste and breeding, so that in her day anything the other women had to show in the way of grace and elegance seemed no better than childish capers by the side of her. She was of all women the shrewdest and most fair-spoken. She was an open-handed giver of gifts. There was also a woman living in Osvif's house whose name was Thorhalla, nicknamed the Talker. She was some relation of

Osvif's. Two sons she had; one named Odd, the other Stein. They were stout and handy men, and they were hard workers and very useful about Osvif's farm.

At Tunga lived a man by the name of Thorarin, a son of Thori Sæling. He was a freeholder in good standing. Thorarin was a large man and a stout one. He was the owner of good ground, but was short of cattle and movables. Osvif wished to buy his lands of him, for he was short of land and had much livestock. This was at length arranged, so that Osvif bought of Thorarin all that part of his land which lay below the Gnupuskard, on both sides of the river, as far down the valley as Stakkagil. These are good lands and fertile. He used them for summer pasturage and dairying. He had a large household. They were in very good circumstances.

To the west, in Saurbæ, there is a farm which is called At Holl (The Hillock). Three brothers-in-law were living there. Thorkel Hvelp (The Puppy) and Knut were brothers and of good family. Their brother-in-law, by the name of Thord, was part owner of the farm with them. He was familiarly known by the name of his mother and so was called Ingunnarson. Thord's father was Glum Geirason. Thord was a fine-looking man, well set up and active, and well at home in all sorts of litigation. Thord was married to the sister of Thorkel and Knut, Aud by name. She was neither a handsome woman nor a tidy one. Thord loved her little. He had looked rather to the property, for there was a good deal of valuable property on the place. And they were doing very well with their farm now, since Thord had come in and taken a hold with them.

XXXIII. Of Gest Oddleifson and of Gudrun's dreams.

Gest Oddleifson was living out west on Bardastrand, at a place called Hagi. He was a great chieftain and a man of great knowledge and insight, gifted with second sight in many things, with many good friends among folks of the better sort, and many came to him for advice. He rode to the Thing every summer, and he always stopped over at Holl. So it happened on a certain time that Gest was again riding to the Thing and stopped over at Holl. He set out from there in the early morning, as he yet had a long way to go. He counted on reaching his brother-in-law Armod's place, at Thykkvaskog, by nightfall. He was married to Gest's sister Thorunn. They had two sons: Örnolf and Haldor. So Gest rode on through the day eastward out of Saurbæ, and came to the hot-baths in Sælingsdal and stopped there for a while. Gudrun had come down to the baths, and she courteously greeted her kinsman Gest. Gest took her greeting very cordially, and they fell to talking together. And both alike were well informed and good talkers. Presently, when the day was getting late, Gudrun said to him: "I wish you would ride back home with me tonight, cousin, and all your company with you. The same is also my father's wish; although he has let me have honor of bearing the message. So also we would like you to stop with us always when you are riding this way either east or west." Gest was much pleased with it, and told her it

was a kind and generous invitation; but he added that he would have to go on his way as he had already arranged to do.

Then Gudrun spoke up and said, "I have been dreaming many dreams this winter, and there are four dreams that puzzle me a good deal, and no one has read them in such a way as to content me; and yet I am not asking that they should be read so as to please me." Gest then said, "Tell me your dreams. May be we can make something of them." Gudrun then went on, "I seemed to be standing out-of-doors, beside a certain brook, and to be wearing a hook-bonnet on my head which did not fit me; and I would have liked to get rid of the bonnet, but there were many who talked and told me that I must not do so. But I did not listen to all that, and I snatched the bonnet off my head and threw it in the brook. And that dream did not go on any farther." Gudrun went on again, "This was the beginning of my next dream, that I seemed to be standing beside the water. And it seemed to me that a silver ring had got on my wrist, which seemed to be my own and to be very becoming to me. It seemed to me a precious ornament and I meant to keep it long. But when I least expected it, the ring slipped from my hand and into the water; and I never saw it again. The loss of it was much more of a loss to me than would seem likely if I had just lost the value of such an ornament. After that I awoke." Gest only said, "That one is no less of a dream." Again Gudrun went on, "This is my third dream. I seemed to have a gold arm-ring, and my loss seemed to have been made good. I was thinking that I would have the good of this ring for a longer time than the other one. But this one did not seem so much more precious to me than the other as gold is dearer than silver. By and by I seemed to have stumbled and tried to save myself with my hands, and in so doing the gold ring struck on some stone and broke in

two pieces, and the pieces seemed to be bleeding. All this seemed more like a great grief than a great loss; for it stuck in my mind that there must have been some flaw in the ring. And when I came to look closely at the break in the ring, then I seemed to find still other flaws in it. And yet it seemed as if I could have had it unbroken if I had taken better care. And this dream was ended." And Gest said, "These three dreams do not look good." And again Gudrun spoke, "This was the fourth of my dreams: I seemed to be wearing a helmet of gold and much bedecked with gems. This ornament seemed to be my own. But what stuck in my mind was that the helmet seemed rather too heavy; so much so that I could scarce manage it, and went about with my head stooping under it. But I did not blame the helmet on that account. And I had no mind to part with it. And yet it tumbled off my head and out into the Hvammsfjord; and after that I awoke. And now all the dreams are told."

He said, "Plainly can I see what these dreams signify. But it will perhaps seem to you to be pretty much all one, for I read them all very much alike. You will have four husbands. And, as I see it, when you are married to the first one it will be no great love match. When you had a large bonnet on your head and seemed not to be content with it, it will mean that you will love him little; and as you snatched the bonnet off your head and threw it out on the water, so you are likely to leave him. Men speak of a thing as 'thrown in the sea' if one puts away what one has and gets nothing for it." Again Gest spoke, "This was your second dream, that you seemed to be wearing a silver ring on your wrist. That is to say that you will marry a second husband, a man of some consequence. Him you will love well and keep but a little while. It will not surprise me if you lose him by drowning. And I have nothing more to say of this dream. This was your third dream, that you seemed to be wearing a gold ring.

That is to say that you will have a third husband. He will scarcely be as much dearer as the one metal is rarer and costlier than the other. And it comes to me as a foreboding that at about that time there will come a great change in the customs of the country, and this husband of yours is likely to have taken up with the new faith and ritual, which we believe will be much the better and more holy. And just as it seemed to you that your ring went to pieces, partly by your own neglect, and as you saw the broken pieces bleeding, so will this husband of yours be killed. And then you will be able to see just what was wrong about that marriage." And once more he said, "Now again, this was your fourth dream, that you were wearing a helmet of gold set with precious stones, and you presently found it too heavy. That is to say that you are to have yet a fourth husband. This one will be a powerful chieftain and will be somewhat overbearing with you. And when you dreamed that your helmet tumbled into the Hvammsfjord, that is to say that he will come to that same fjord as the closing hours of his life. And of this dream there is nothing more for me to say." Gudrun flushed blood-red while the dreams were being made out. She had nothing to say of it until Gest had done speaking. Then Gudrun said, "You might have made a handsomer forecast out of all this, if it had all been given such a turn by me. But I thank you all the same for having made out these dreams. But there is much to take thought of if all these things must come to pass."

Then Gudrun again asked Gest to stop over the day with them, and told him that Osvif and he would find many grave matters to talk over. But he said, "I shall have to ride farther, as I have already promised. But you will give my greetings to your father and tell him these words of mine; that the time is coming when the distance between Osvif's place and mine will be less than now, and

we can then conveniently talk things over if there is nothing else to hinder our talking to each other."

After this, Gudrun turned back home and Gest rode on his way, and he met one of Olaf's men by the fence. He brought word from Olaf, to invite Gest to Hjardarholt. Gest promised to visit Olaf during the day, but said that he would be stopping overnight at Thykkvaskog. So the farmhand turned back home and told Olaf. Olaf called for horses and rode out to meet Gest on the way with a small company. They met Gest down by the sea-shore. Olaf greeted him cordially and invited him to his home with all his company. Gest thanked him for the invitation and said that he would ride back with him to the house and see his home, but said that he would be staying overnight with Armod. Gest stayed but a little while, and yet he looked the farm over quite widely and had a good word to say for it all; saying that no means had been spared on this farm.

Olaf kept Gest company on the way, as far as the Laxá river. The foster-brothers, Olaf's sons and Bolli, had been in swimming during the day. The Olafsons led in this sport, but there were also many young men from other farms at the swimming-place. Kjartan and Bolli came out of the water when the company came riding down, and they were pretty much dressed by the time Gest and Olaf rode down to the river. Gest looked the young men over for a while, and asked Olaf which was Kjartan and which Bolli, and Olaf then pointed them out one by one with his spear-butt and named all of them that were there. And there were many other men there, full-grown, who had come in from the swimming by this time and were sitting on the riverbank along with Kjartan and the rest. Gest remarked that he could see no mark of Olaf's kindred in any of these men. After a little, Olaf said, "There is no denying your superior talents, Gest. You recognise men whom you have never seen

before. But now I would like you to tell me which of these young men will come to be the better man." And Gest answered, "All that will fall out very much along the line of your affections. Kjartan will be rated the best, so long as he is alive." Thereupon Gest put his horse to a swift run and rode off. In a little while his son Thord fell in beside him and asked: "What is it now, Father, that troubles you, that you are shedding tears?" Gest told him, "There is no use of talking about it; and yet I am not going to keep silent about things which will come to pass in your own day. It will not take me unawares if Bolli some day is found with Kjartan lying dead before him, and so himself come in for a violent death. And all this is a grievous thing to know concerning such great and notable men as these." Then they rode forward to the Thing. And the Thing passed off quietly.

XXXIV. Of Gudrun's marriage to Thorvald; about 989.

THERE was a man by the name of Thorvald, a son of Haldor the Godi of Garpsdal, who lived in the Garpsdal valley in the countryside of Gilsfjord; a man of wealth and of no heroic temper. He bespoke marriage with Gudrun, Osvif's daughter, one summer at the Althing, when she was fifteen years old. His suit was accepted, but Osvif told him the terms of the contract would be such as to show that he was not Gudrun's equal. Thorvald spoke very temperately, saying that he was suing for a wife, not for a dowry. So Gudrun was pledged to Thorvald, and Osvif alone settled the terms of the contract. And it was the agreement that Gudrun was to have full control of their joint property so soon as they were bedded together, and to own a half interest in it all, whether their living together were for a longer or a shorter time. He was also to buy her jewels and ornaments to such a value that no other equally well-to-do woman was possessed of more or better, provided always that his property was not impaired by it. So the folks then rode away home from the Thing. Gudrun was not consulted in this matter, and she was rather unhappy about it; yet it all passed off quietly. The wedding was at Garpsdal, in the *Tvímánað*.[1]

Gudrun had little love for Thorvald, and was greatly set on the buying of costly ornaments. Indeed there were

[1] 26th August to 24th September.

no precious things in the country of the Western fjords so valuable but that Gudrun thought she ought reasonably to have them, and she paid Thorvald with ill temper if he failed to buy, whatever price they were held at. Thord Ingunnarson came to be on easy terms with Thorvald and Gudrun and spent much of his time on the place, and there was a good deal of talk about a love affair between Thord and Gudrun. On a certain time Gudrun was again begging Thorvald to buy jewellery. Thorvald told her she was going too far, and boxed her ears. Then said Gudrun, "Now you have given me something which we womenfolk set great store by—a rosy complexion. And you have taught me a lesson, too, not to bother you with begging." Thord came in that same evening. Gudrun told him her disgrace and asked him how she was to repay it. Thord smiled and said, "Here is where I can give you good advice. Make him a shirt with a 'divorce head-hole,'[1] and then divorce him for wearing it." Gudrun said nothing to the contrary, and there they left the matter. That same spring Gudrun declared her divorce from Thorvald and went back home to Laugar. Presently after there was a division of the estate between Thorvald and Gudrun and she came in for one-half of the entire property. So now she was worth more than ever. Two winters had they been living together. The same spring Ingunn sold her land in the Kroksfjord, the place which has since been known as Ingunnarstadir, and moved out west to Skalmarnes. She had been married to Glum Geirason, as was written above. At this time Hallstein the Godi was living on Hallsteinsnes, on the west of Thorskafjord; a man of large means and moderately popular.

[1] A shirt so low-cut about the neck as to show the nipples, which was a formal ground for divorce.

XXXV. Of Gudrun's second marriage.

Kotkel was the name of a man who had come out to Iceland a little before this time. His wife's name was Grima. Their sons were Hallbjörn Slikisteinsauga[1] and Stigandi. These folks were from the Hebrides. All of them were skilled in magic and were great wizards. Hallstein the Godi took them in and settled them at Urdir in Skalmarnes, and their neighbors did not take kindly to their living there.

This summer Gest went by boat to Saurbæ, as was usual with him. He found lodging overnight at Hol, in Saurbæ, and the two brothers and their brother-in-law Thord lent him horses, as usual. Thord Ingunnarson joined Gest's company, and so came to Laugar in Sælingsdal. Gudrun Osvifsdaughter rode along to the Thing, and Thord Ingunnarson kept her company. One day as they were riding across the Bláskog moors, in fine weather, Gudrun spoke up and said, "Is it true, Thord, that your wife Aud is in the habit of wearing breeches with a codpiece, and with the ends of them wound about her legs all the way down and tucked into her shoes?" He answered that he had not noticed anything of the kind. "There would not be much to it then," said Gudrun, "if you have not noticed it. But why should she be called Breeches-Aud if that is the case?" Thord told her, "I take it that

[1] "Grindstone-eye." The "eye" of a grindstone, in the Scandinavian idiom, is the hole through its middle, through which its spindle is fastened.

she will have been so called only for a very short time." Gudrun replied, "It will mean all the more to her that she is going to keep the name for a long time." Presently they reached the Thing. And there is nothing to tell of at the Thing. Thord spent much of his time in Gest's booth, and was much in Gudrun's company. One day Thord Ingunnarson asked Gudrun how much of a breach it might be for a woman to wear men's breeches. "That is just as much of a fault in a woman as it is for a man if he wears a shirt with so low-cut a 'head-hole' as to show his nipples. Either one is ground for divorce." Then said Thord, "What would you advise me? To declare divorce from Aud here in the Thing, or back home at the assizes where I will have more of a backing? For there are some headstrong fellows who are likely to make a grievance of this thing." Gudrun answered him after a while, "The sluggard's business bides the evening." Thereupon Thord jumped up and went straight to the Law-Stone and called men to witness that he declared himself divorced from Aud, and gave as ground for it that she was wearing breeches with a codpiece like menfolk. Aud's brothers did not like it, and yet nothing was done about it. Thord rode home from the Thing in company with Osvif's sons. When these tidings came to Aud she said, "It is well I should know it," said Aud, "if I only had the chance."

Shortly after this Thord rode out westward into Saurbæ with a company of twelve to see to a division of the property, and that matter was easily arranged, for Thord made small account of how the goods were divided. Thord brought back with him to Laugar a drove of cattle. Presently afterward he made his suit for Gudrun in marriage. He readily got Osvif's consent, and Gudrun made no objection. The wedding was to be at Laugar in the tenth week of summer. It was a very sumptuous wedding feast. Thord and Gudrun's life together was a happy one. This thing alone stood in the way of Thorkel

Hvelp and Knut proceeding against Thord Ingunnarson, that they could not get backing enough for it.

The next following summer the Hol folks went to their summer dairying in the Hvammsdal. Aud was at the *sel*.[1] The Laugar folks had their dairying in the Lambadal, which runs westward into the hills back of the Hvammsdal.

Aud asked the young man who herded the milch-cattle how often he came across Thord's herdsman. He said it happened very frequently, as was likely to be the case, seeing that the valley lay between the two rivers. Then Aud told him, "Today you are to see the herdsman from Laugar and find out for me how many of the folks were staying at home and who were at the sel. And always speak well and kindly of Thord, as is right and proper for you to do." The young man promised to do as she told him. And when he came home at night Aud asked him what he had to tell. The herdsman answered, "I have found out something that will be good news to you; that just now there is a wide floor-space between Thord's bed and Gudrun's. She is at the sel, and he is busy house-building at home, and Gest and he are alone at the winter-house." "You have been a good scout," said she; "so now have two horses saddled for me by bedtime."

The herdsboy did as she told him. And shortly before sunset Aud got to horse; and that time she was wearing breeches, and no mistake. The herdsboy rode the other horse, and he could hardly keep up with her, she rode so hard. She rode southward over the Sælingsdal moorland and made no stay until they were close under the farm-yard fence at Laugar. There she dismounted and told

[1] The *sel* was a cabin which served as an outlying dairy during the summer, commonly at some distance from the home farm, the "winter housing," and within the range of upland pasture attached to the farm. It was occupied temporarily for the summer dairying season, after the manner of the Norwegian *sæter*. The word is still current in the Norwegian dialects.

the herdsboy to hold the horses while she went indoors. Aud went to the door. She went in and to the closet-bed in which Thord was sleeping. The door of the bed was fallen to, but the bar was not in place. She went up to the bed, where Thord was lying asleep, on his back. Then Aud woke Thord, and he turned over on his side when he saw there was some one there. She then drew a short-sword and lunged at Thord and gave him a great wound. It took him across the right arm, and he was also hurt across both breasts. So hard had she struck that the sword stuck fast in the bed-frame. Then Aud went out and back to the horses, mounted and rode away.

Thord tried to get up when he got the hurt, but could not, for the loss of blood disabled him. By this time Osvif was awake and asked what was doing. And Thord told him he had got badly hurt somehow. Osvif asked if he knew who it was that had attacked him, and got up and bandaged his wounds. Thord said he believed Aud was the one who had done it. Osvif offered to ride after her; said she was likely to have come with a very small following and that her punishment was ready for her. But Thord told him he would have nothing of the kind, and said that she had only done what she had a right to.

Aud got home about sunrise and her brothers asked where she had been. Aud told them she had been to Laugar, and then told what had happened while she was away. They told her it was well done, but doubted if she had done enough. Thord was laid up for a long time with his hurts, and the wounds across his chest healed well and readily but he never had the full use of his arm again.

All was quiet through the winter following, but the next spring Ingunn, Thord's mother, came back east from Skalmarnes. And he made her welcome. She said she wanted to come in under Thord's care; she said Kotkel was driving her out with his thievery and witchcraft, and

also that he had the backing of Hallstein the Godi. Thord immediately took this matter up, and said that he was going to bring these thieves to a reckoning in spite of Hallstein. He set out directly with a company of ten. Ingunn, too, went west with him. He went by a cutter from Tjaldanes. So they went on west to Skalmarnes. Thord had all the household goods belonging to his mother brought on board the boat. The livestock was to be driven overland, back of the inlets. There were twelve of them in the boat, altogether. Ingunn and another woman were with them. Thord then went on to Kotkel's place with a company of ten men. Kotkel's sons were not at home. He then laid a charge against Kotkel and Grima and their sons, for theft and sorcery, with a penalty of full outlawry,[1] and summoned them to answer these charges at the Althing. After that he returned to the boat.

Then presently Hallbjörn and Stigandi came home, by the time Thord had got away from land, although he was but a little way out. Kotkel told his sons what had taken place while they were away. The two brothers were furious. They said that never before had any man dared to show them such open hostility. Meantime Kotkel set about building a big witch-scaffold. On this they all mounted. There they chanted their wise ballads; magical incantations. Thereupon there came up a great tempest. And Thord Ingunnarson and his company out at sea soon found that it was for them the storm had been raised. Their boat drove out westward past Skalmarnes. Thord showed a masterly seamanship. Folks ashore saw them throwing overboard everything of any weight except the

[1] The usual penalty for criminal offenses was outlawry; of which there were several degrees. In a case of *Skóggangr,* which is here in question, the outlawed person was placed outside the pale of the law, without abatement. It was a felony to shelter, aid or transport such an outlaw.

men and women. And the folks on shore then looked to see Thord make a landing, for he had then got past the worst reefs and breakers. Thereupon there rose up an enormous breaker right near the shore, such as no man had seen before, and fell upon the boat so that it turned keel upwards all at once. There Thord was drowned, and all who were with him, and the boat was broken into splinters. The keel of it came ashore on what has since been known as Keel Island. Thord's shield drifted ashore on the island which has since then been called Shield Island. Thord's body, and those of his company, were washed ashore shortly after, and a grave-mound was raised over their dead bodies at the place since known as Haugsnes.

XXXVI. Thorleik Höskuldson takes Kotkel in.

THESE tidings went far and wide and were spoken of with blame and horror. Such folks were considered unfit to live, who carried on sorceries of this kind, such as Kotkel and his folks had displayed in this case. Gudrun was greatly cast down by Thord's death, and she was also at that time in a delicate state and far gone. She gave birth to a boy. He was sprinkled with water and named Thord.

At this time Snorri the Godi was living at Helgafell. He was a kinsman and a good friend of Osvif's. Gudrun and her folks counted greatly on his backing. Snorri Godi came there on a visit, to a banquet. Gudrun then spoke of her troubles to Snorri and he promised to help them about these matters whenever he should see an opportunity, and to comfort her he offered to adopt her child. Gudrun accepted the offer and said she would count on his help and be guided by his advice. This Thord was nicknamed the Tomcat. He was the father of the poet Stuf.

Presently after this Gest Oddleifson went to see Hallstein the Godi and gave him the choice between two things: either he must drive these witches away, or else Gest would have them killed; "and it has already been put off too long." Hallstein was quick to choose, and said they would have to go, and told them not to stop west of the

Dalaheidi,[1] and told them also that it would be nearer their due if they were put to death. So Kotkel and his folks went their way, taking with them nothing but a stud of four horses. The stallion was black; he was a big and beautiful beast and had been trained for horse-fights. Nothing is told of their wanderings until such time as they came to Kambsnes, to Thorleik Höskuldson. He asked them to sell him the horses, for he saw that they were uncommonly valuable animals. Kotkel replied, "I will make you an offer. Take the horses, and give me a place to live here somewhere near you." Thorleik told him, "Would not the horses come rather high at that price? I have been told that there are various grave charges laid against you in the country." Kotkel replied, "You are perhaps speaking of the Lauga-folks?" Thorleik told him that such was the case. "But this quarrel with Gudrun and her brothers is quite a different matter from what you have been told. People have raised a hue and cry against us without cause. You may as well take the horses, for all of that. And then, too, according to what is told of you, we should not be likely to be molested by the country folk hereabout so long as we have your backing." So now Thorleik argued the matter further, and the stud of horses seemed very good to him, and Kotkel argued his case very cleverly. In the end Thorleik took the horses; and he gave them a homestead at Leidolfstadir in the Laxárdal. He also found them in the necessary livestock.

All this presently came to the knowledge of the Laugafolk, and the Osvifsons were all for doing away with Kotkel and his sons out of hand. But Osvif told them, "Let us rather benefit by Snorri Godi's advice, and leave that job to some one else. For it will not be long before Kotkel's neighbors will come in for brand-new grievances

[1] The watershed which marked the division between this countryside and the next to the eastward.

against them, and Thorleik will be the one to suffer the greatest damage, as is quite right. Many will soon be his enemies who have made much of him in the past. But I shall not hinder your doing Kotkel and his folks any mischief you like, if no one else undertakes to chase them out of the country, or to kill them off altogether, by the time three years are past." Gudrun and her brothers agreed to this. Kotkel's folks made no great provision, and yet they had no need to buy either food or forage through the winter. They were well disliked by the neighborhood, but none dared do them a mischief, on Thorleik's account.

XXXVII. Of Hrut and Eldgrim, and of Hrut's son Kári's death by sorcery.

It happened one summer at the Thing, as Thorleik was sitting in his tent, that a big man walked into the booth. He gave Thorleik the usual greeting, and Thorleik returned the man's greeting and asked who he might be and what might be his name. The man said his name was Eldgrim and that he was living in the Borgarfjord country on a farmstead called Eldgrimsstadir. This farm lies in the valley that runs westerly into the hills, between Muli and Grisartunga. It is now known as the Grimsdal. And Thorleik said, "I have heard you spoken of, and it is said that there is nothing small about you." Eldgrim went on, "This is the errand which has brought me here, that I want to buy of you that high-priced stud of horses which Kotkel gave you last summer." Thorleik said, "The horses are not for sale." Eldgrim went on, "I will give you a stud of the same number of horses and something to boot; so much that many would say I should be paying double their value." Thorleik told him, "I am no trader. And you will never get these horses, even if you bid three times their value." Eldgrim replied, "It is no lie that you are proud and headstrong. And I could wish that you get a poorer price than what I have offered, and still have to part with the horses." Thorleik's face went deep red at these words and he told him, "You will have to come to close quarters, Eldgrim, if you are going

to bully me out of the horses." Eldgrim replied, "It may seem quite unlikely to you that you will ever have to back down for me; but some time this summer I am going to take a look at the horses; whichever of us two is to own the horses from that time on." Thorleik told him, "Keep your promise, and give me an even chance." That was the end of their talk. It was remarked by those who heard what was said, that they were well matched for a quarrel. The Thing ended and the folks went home, and there is nothing more to tell.

Early one morning at Hrutstadir, at Hrut Herjolfson's, a man went out to look about; and when he came in again Hrut asked what he had seen. The man said there was nothing to tell of except that he had seen a man come riding through the shallows to where Thorleik's horses were standing, and that the man had dismounted and caught up the horses. Hrut asked him where the horses were. And the farmhand answered, "They have been keeping pretty well to their grazing-ground so far; they were in your meadow, just below the barnyard fence." Hrut remarked, "It is true, Cousin Thorleik is commonly not over particular about this matter of grazing. And yet it seems to me likely that his horses are being driven off without his orders." Hrut then got up, in shirt and linen drawers, put on a fur cloak and picked up a gold-inlaid battle-axe which King Harald had given him. He went out swiftly, and saw a man riding by with the horses below the yard-fence. Hrut went down to meet him, and saw that it was Eldgrim driving the horses before him. Hrut gave him the usual greetings. Eldgrim returned his greetings, but somewhat slowly. Hrut asked where he was going with the horses. Eldgrim said, "I will not deny the fact. And I know also the kinship there is between Thorleik and you. But I have come after the horses in such a way that I do not intend ever to let him get them back. And I have lived up to what I promised

him at the Thing; I have not come for the horses with a crowd of men behind me." Hrut told him, "It is no great exploit for you to run the horses off while Thorleik is lying asleep in bed. You will best live up to what you two agreed on if you meet him face to face before you take the horses out of the neighborhood." "You may as well warn Thorleik if you want to," said Eldgrim. "You can see for yourself that I have come away from home in such shape that I would like to have a meeting with Thorleik." And he brandished the barbed spear which he carried. He also had a helmet on his head and carried a sword, with a shield by his side; and he was wearing a coat-of-mail. Hrut told him, "I would rather take to something else than run over to Kambsnes. I am getting slow-footed. But I will not stand by and let Thorleik be plundered, if I can do anything about it, although the kinship between us has not counted for much so far." Eldgrim said, "Not that you mean to take the horses away from me?" Hrut replied, "I will give you another stud of horses if you will let these go; although they will not be as fine horses as these." Eldgrim replied, "You are extremely fair-spoken, Hrut; but since I have got my hands on Thorleik's horses you will not get them away from me either with bribes or threats." Then said Hrut, "In that case I should say you are choosing what will be the worse for both of us." Eldgrim now broke off and turned to go and started his horse; but when Hrut saw this he swung his martel-de-fer and drove it between Eldgrim's shoulders so that the coat-of-mail gave way and the point of the martel-de-fer ran through and out at the front. Eldgrim tumbled off his horse dead, as might be expected. Hrut thereupon covered the body.[1]

[1] In a case of manslaughter the body must be covered so completely as to hide it, and the slaughter as well as the place of the burial must then be announced to the dead man's kin or to the

The place is called Eldgrimsholt, southerly from Kambsnes.

After this Hrut rode down to Kambsnes and told the news to Thorleik. He broke out in a fit of anger. He considered that a great shame had been put on him in this affair; all the while that Hrut thought he had been doing him very much of a good turn. Thorleik told him both that he had been ill used and that no good would be given in return. Hrut told him that he would have to see about all that; and so they parted, quite without goodwill. Hrut was eighty years old at the time he killed Eldgrim, and this exploit added not a little to his renown. To Thorleik it seemed that Hrut had no claim to credit in all this. It is plain to his mind that he could himself have put Eldgrim out of the way if they had come to blows, seeing it had taken such a little thing to finish him.

Presently after, Thorleik went to see his tenants, Kotkel and Grima, and asked them to do something in the way of mischief to Hrut. They undertook this thing quite willingly and said they were all ready for it. And Thorleik went back home. After a little Kotkel and Grim and their sons set out from home. This was in the nighttime. They went to Hrut's place and there they set about a great work of witchcraft. And when the chanting of the witches broke out the folks who were indoors could not tell what it was all about, but the chanting was very sweet to hear. Hrut alone understood the meaning of these sounds, and he gave orders that no one must look out of doors during the night, "and let everyone keep awake as best you can, and so we shall get no hurt of it, if you do as I say." Yet they all fell asleep. Hrut kept awake the longest, but he too fell asleep. Hrut had a son by the name of Kári, who was then twelve years old,

near neighbors; which made the technical distinction between manslaughter and murder.

and was the most promising of Hrut's sons. He was very fond of him. Kári scarcely slept at all, for it was for him the magic was made. He could scarcely rest at all. Kári got up and looked out. He went on right into the magic and fell down dead. Hrut and his folks awoke in the morning and presently missed his son. He was found dead not far from the door. This was a great blow to Hrut. And he raised a barrow over Kári.

After this he went to see Olaf Höskuldson and told him these things that had come to pass. Olaf fell into a passion on hearing these tidings and said it had been a great piece of carelessness and folly to let such criminals as Kotkel and his folks settle down to live right next door, and he also said that Thorleik had disgraced himself in his dealings with Hrut, although he considered that worse had come of it than Thorleik intended. Olaf went on to say that they had best kill Kotkel and his wife and sons right away; "though it is already over late." So Olaf and Hrut set out with a company of fifteen men. But so soon as the folks at Kotkel's saw the men come riding into their place they took to flight back into the hills. There Hallbjörn Grindstone-eye was overtaken and a poke [1] was drawn over his head. Men were set to watch him while the rest went in chase of Kotkel and Grima farther up into the hills and moors. Kotkel and Grima were caught on the pass over the ridge between Haukadal and Laxárdal. There they were stoned to death and a heap of stones piled over them, the traces of which may still be seen. It is called the Devil's Lookout (*Skrattavardi*). Stigandi made his way to the south from the ridge, to Haukadal, and there he got away from them. Hrut and his sons then took Hallbjörn down to the seashore. They got a boat and rowed out to sea with him.

[1] *Belgr* is, specifically, the skin of some fur-bearing animal, flayed off without being slit; as, *e.g.*, the pelt of an otter or badger.

They then took the poke off his head and tied a stone about his neck. Hallbjörn swept the shore with his eye, and the sweep of his eye was no good. Then Hallbjörn spoke up and said, "It was not on a day of good omen that our folks came here to this Kambsnes and into touch with Thorleik. And this I call you to witness," said he, "that Thorleik will spend but very few merry days there after this, and it shall go hard with anyone who comes to take his place." And this curse seems to have come true, on the whole. After this they sank him in the sea and rowed back to shore.

A little later Hrut went to see his kinsman Olaf and told him that he was not content to let Thorleik off with things in this shape, and asked Olaf to help him out with men to make a raid on Thorleik. But Olaf said, "It is an unseemly thing for you kinsfolk to lay violent hands on one another. Thorleik has been unlucky in all this. I would rather see what can be done to keep the peace between you. More than once you have had the patience to wait your turn." Hrut replied, "It is no use looking for anything of the kind. Never will this trouble between us be mended. If I could have my wish we should not both be living long in the Laxárdal hereafter." Then Olaf told him, "It will scarcely be smooth going for you to push things farther with Thorleik than I give you leave. And if you do so, then it is not unlikely that 'the hill will be as steep as the hollow.'" Now Hrut could see that the thing had come to a standstill, and he went back home very much out of humor; and yet all might be said to be well. And all men kept the peace for the rest of that season.

XXXVIII. Of Stigandi's death; Thorleik goes abroad.

Now it is to be told of Stigandi that he turned vagabond and became a dangerous rogue. There was a man by the name of Thord, who lived in the Hundadal. He was a wealthy man, of mean birth. It was remarked as something unusual that summer in Hundadal that the yield of milk fell off badly. A woman herded the cattle. The folks began to notice that she was getting rich in jewels and such like precious things and that she sometimes was away for a long time together, so that none knew where she was. Her master Thord had her forced into telling, and when she got scared she told that a man sometimes came to meet her. "He is a large man," she said, "and I think he is a fine-looking man." Then Thord asked her how soon the man was likely to come again. She said that she thought it would be very soon.

Thereupon Thord went to see Olaf and told him that Stigandi was believed to be thereabout, and asked him to come with him with his men and take him. Olaf turned to immediately and went over to Hundadal. The servant woman was then brought before him. Olaf then asked where Stigandi had his den. She said she did not know that. Olaf offered to pay her to put Stigandi in their way, and they came to terms about it. The same day she went out to look after her cattle. Stigandi presently came to her. She made him welcome and offered to look through his hair for him. So he lay down with his head on her lap and very soon fell asleep. Then she slipped

out from under his head and went to Olaf and told them about it. They came up on Stigandi, and they had made up their mind that he must not do what his brother had done, that he must not have a chance to turn his eyes on things and so make mischief for them. So they took a poke and drew it over his head. With this Stigandi woke up, but he made no stir, for now there were many to one man. There was a slit in the poke and Stigandi got one look out at the hillside over against the place. It was a beautiful stretch of ground and was deep in grass. But now it was as if a whirlwind had struck it and turned the earth over, so that grass never grew there again. The place is now known as the Brenna (the Burn). After this they stoned Stigandi to death and buried him under a heap of stones. Olaf dealt generously with the woman and gave her her freedom, and she went with him to Hjardarholt.

Hallbjörn Grindstone-eye was washed ashore in the surf not long after he had been drowned. He was buried at a place called Knarrarnes, and he walked again a good deal. There is talk of a man by the name of Thorkel Skalli (Thorkel Baldhead). He was living in the Thykkvaskog country on ground inherited from his father. He was a bold fellow and a man of great strength. On a certain evening there was a cow missing at Thykkvaskog and Thorkel went out to look for her along with his man. This was after nightfall, but there was a moon. Thorkel was going on by himself, when he thought he saw a cow on the hillside ahead of him; but when he got up to it it turned out to be Grindstone-eye, and no cow. The two drove into each other headlong, and Hallbjörn gave ground; and when Thorkel least expected it he slipped out of his grip and down into the earth. Thorkel then went back home. And the man too had got home by that time and had found the cow. No more mischief came of Hallbjörn after this.

Thorbjörn Skrjup was dead by this time and so was Melkorka. They both lie buried in a barrow in Laxárdal; but after their time their son Lambi was living on the place. He was a good deal of a driver, thrifty and very well-to-do. Lambi was made more of than his father had been, on account of his mother's connections. And he was on good terms with his half-brother Olaf.

So the winter next following the killing of Kotkel was past. In the spring the two brothers, Olaf and Thorleik, met and Olaf raised the question as to whether Thorleik intended to go on living at Kambsnes. Thorleik told him that such was the case; and Olaf said, "I have a mind to ask you, my brother, to break away and go abroad. You will be well received wherever you go. And I have gathered this from our uncle Hrut that what you have had to do with each other has given him a chill. I do not like to run the risk of your being so near neighbors any longer. Hrut has a good deal to say, and his sons are great bullies, every one of them, headlong fellows. I shall be in a very awkward position by reason of the calls of kindred if the two of you fall out, all the while that both of you are kinsmen of mine." Thorleik replied, "I am not worrying about my being able to stand up against Hrut and his sons, and I will not be leaving the country on that account; but if it makes so much of a difference to you, my friend, then I will do as you say. And indeed the time when I have been most contented with my share of life was when I have been out of the country. So also I am sure you will do no worse by my son Bolli for my not being on hand; and I care more about him than anyone else." Olaf replied, "You have made a good choice in all this if you will do as I ask you. And so far as Bolli is concerned I mean to do hereafter the same as heretofore and do no worse by him than by my own sons." And with this the two brothers parted on the best of terms.

So now Thorleik sells his lands and lays in trade-goods. He bought a ship that was laid up at Dögurdarnes, and so soon as he had made everything ready he went aboard with his wife and all his household. The ship made a good passage and reached Norway in the fall. From there he went on south to Denmark, as he no longer felt at home in Norway. Most of his friends and kindred were dead, and some of them had been driven out of the country. Thorleik afterward went on to Sweden. It is the common report that Thorleik never lived to any great age, but that he stood high as long as he lived. And here ends the story of Thorleik.

XXXIX. Of Kjartan and Gudrun.

When the gossip ran on the doings of Hrut and Thorleik, among the busy-bodies of the Breidafjord-valley country, it would commonly be remarked that Hrut had got the worse of it for having to do with Kotkel and his sons. And then Osvif would tell Gudrun and her brothers to stop and think, whether they would have been better off for having themselves taken the risk of dealing with such hellions as Kotkel's folks proved to be. But Gudrun would tell him, "No one is unadvised who has the benefit of your counsel, Father."

Olaf was now sitting at home on his estate in great honor and esteem, with all his sons about him, as well as Bolli their cousin and foster-brother. Kjartan was altogether the foremost of Olaf's sons. And Kjartan and Bolli were the closest friends. So that Kjartan went nowhere but that Bolli kept him company. Kjartan went often to the hot baths in Sælingsdal. And often it happened that Gudrun, too, was at the baths. To Kjartan it seemed very good to get into talk with Gudrun, for she was both wise and beautiful and a good talker. It was all the talk that Kjartan and Gudrun would make the best matched couple of all the young folks that were growing up just then. At the same time there was a close friendship between Olaf and Osvif, with frequent visits back and forth, and relations grew no less cordial because the young folks were growing fond of each other. On a certain day Olaf had a talk with Kjartan. "I do not know

why it is," said he, "that it always weighs on my mind, your going to Laugar and keeping company with Gudrun. It is by no means that I do not think Gudrun is to be preferred before all other women. She is the only one whom I consider to be altogether your equal. But it sticks in my mind as a boding, though I am not making a prediction of it, that no good will come of it for us in the end." To this Kjartan said that he would never cross his father's wishes if he could help it, but he went on to say that he believed it would all end more happily than he looked for. Kjartan went on as he had been doing, Bolli constantly went with him. And so the seasons went by.

XL. Of Kjartan and Bolli in Norway.

THERE was a man by the name of Asgeir, nicknamed Ædikoll (Hothead), who was living at Asgeirsá in the Vididal. He was a son of Audun Skökul (Shivers); he first of all his kin came out to Iceland, and he took up the land in Vididal. A second son of Audun's was named Thorgrim Grayhead. He was the father of Asmund, father of Grettir. Asgeir Ædikoll had five children. A son of his was Audun, father of Asgeir, father of Audun, father of Egil, who married Ulfeid the daughter of Eyolf the Lame, and whose son was that Eyolf that was killed at the Althing. A second son of Asgeir's was Thorvald, whose daughter Dalla was married to Bishop Isleif; Bishop Gizur was their son. A third son of Asgeir's was named Kalf. All of Asgeir's sons were fine stout men. Kalf Asgeirson was in the overseas trade at this time and was said to be doing very well. A daughter of Asgeir's was Thurid, who was married to Thorkel Kuggi, son of Thord Gellir; they had a son by the name of Thorstein. A second daughter of Asgeir's was named Hrefna. She was the most beautiful woman in that north country and had many friends and admirers; for Asgeir was a man of means and of great force.

It is said that once upon a time Kjartan Olafson set off south to Borg, in the Borgarfjord country. His mother's brother Thorstein Egilson lived there. Bolli was with him, for such was the brotherly love between them that neither was happy without the other. Thor-

stein welcomed Kjartan with the greatest affection, and said he would take it more kindly the longer he stayed with them. So Kjartan stayed on at Borg for some time. There was a ship lying up at the mouth of the Gufá that summer. This ship belonged to Kalf Asgeirson. He had been staying at Thorstein Egilson's over winter. Kjartan spoke to Thorstein in private and told him that much of what had brought him there was that he wanted to buy a half-interest in this ship of Kalf, "for I have a mind to go abroad," and he went on to ask Thorstein what was his opinion of Kalf. Thorstein said he considered him a sound and capable fellow. "And it is quite reasonable, my friend," said Thorstein, "that you will want to get out and see something of other lands. It is likely that your travels will be notable in one way and another. And your kinsfolk too have a lively interest in seeing how you make out on this expedition." Kjartan said it was likely to turn out all right. He then bought a half interest in the ship of Kalf and they made up a partnership of share-and-share-alike. It was agreed that Kjartan was to return to the ship by the tenth week of summer. Kjartan was seen off with gifts on leaving Borg, after which Bolli and he rode back home.

Now when Olaf heard of this arrangement it seemed to him that Kjartan had made up his mind in a hurry, but he said also that he would not stand in the way. Soon after this Kjartan rode over to Laugar and told Gudrun about his going away. Gudrun told him, "You have been very sudden about this, Kjartan," and she had something more to say about it from which Kjartan could gather that Gudrun felt hurt about it. Kjartan told her, "Don't let this annoy you. I will do anything else to please you." Gudrun replied: "Make good your promise. I will let you know right soon what it is to be." Kjartan told her to do so. She then said, "Then I want to go abroad with you this summer, and so you will have made up for

your hasty move; for I have no love for Iceland." "That will not do," said Kjartan. "Your brothers are young and thoughtless and your father is getting old; and they would be left quite helpless if you leave the country. Wait for me for three years." Gudrun said she would make no such promise, and with that they parted in some disagreement; and Kjartan rode back home.

Olaf rode up to the Thing that summer. Kjartan rode up with his father eastward out of Hjardarholt as far as Nordrárdal, where they parted company. From there Kjartan rode on down to the ship, and Bolli was in company with him. They were ten Icelanders, altogether, none of whom would willingly leave Kjartan, for friendship's sake. And with this company Kjartan rode down to where the ship was lying. Kalf Asgeirson made them welcome. Much goods did Kjartan and Bolli take with them on the voyage. So now they got ready, and so soon as the wind favored they sailed out along the Borgarfjord with a light and steady following breeze and out to sea. They had favorable weather. They made Norway rather to the northerly and sailed up the fjord to Drontheim, where they met people from whom they got the news. They were told that there had been a change of rulers in the country; that Earl Hákon had gone under and King Olaf Tryggvason had come in, and that all of Norway had passed into his power. King Olaf had proclaimed a change of faith in Norway; and the people were submitting to it only here and there. Kjartan's company sailed on up the fjord to Nidaros (Drontheim).

At this time there were many Icelanders in Norway who were men of some consequence. There were three ships lying along the wharves, all of which were owned by Icelanders. One of them belonged to Brand the Spendthrift, son of Vermund Thorgrimson; a second vessel belonged to Hallfred Vandrædaskald; the third was owned by two brothers, one named Bjarni, the other

Thorhall, sons of Breidár-Skeggi, from Fljotshlid back east. All these men had intended to sail for Iceland that summer, but the king had laid an embargo on all these ships because they were not willing to take up with the new faith which he ordained. The Icelanders all welcomed Kjartan, but Brand most of all, for they knew each other well from before. The Icelanders now consulted together and came to an agreement to reject the new faith which the king had ordained; and all of these men were bound in this agreement, all those named above. Kjartan and Kalf now laid their vessel alongside the wharf, discharged their cargo, and set about taking care of their goods. King Olaf was in the town at the time. He was told of the coming of this ship, as also that there were many aboard who are men of some consequence.

On a certain fair-weather day along in the fall men from the town were going swimming in the Nid river. Kjartan and those with him saw it. Then Kjartan called his shipmates to go along to the swimming, to pass the time. So they did. There was one man who was far the best swimmer. Kjartan turned to Bolli and asked him if he would like to try conclusions with this townsman. Bolli replied, "I am thinking that it is not for me." "I don't see what has come of your sportsmanship," said Kjartan, "but in that case I am going in." Bolli told him, "You will have to do as you like." So Kjartan went down into the river and made for this man who was their best swimmer and put him down and held him under for some time. Kjartan let the fellow up. And when they had been up for a short time the man gripped Kjartan and put him under; and they stayed under quite as long as Kjartan had a mind to. They came up again, and neither one had anything to say. For the third time they went under, and this time they stayed under much longer than before. So that Kjartan was beginning to

doubt what this game would come to, and indeed Kjartan was thinking he had never before been in so tight a place. In the end they came to the surface and swam ashore. Then the townsman spoke up, "Who is this man?" and Kjartan told his name. The townsman told him, "You are a good swimmer. Are you just as good at other sports as in this?" Kjartan answered, rather slow-spoken, "It was the talk while I was in Iceland that it was much the same about other things. But there is little to say for all that now." The townsman told him, "It makes a difference whom you have had to do with. How is it that you ask me no questions?" Kjartan replied, "I don't care what your name is." The townsman told him, "You are both a stout fellow and one who puts on airs. But you are going to find out my name all the same, and who it is you have had to do with in your swimming. This is Olaf Tryggvason, the King." Kjartan made no answer, and turned to go without his cloak. He was wearing a red satin jacket. By this time the king was nearly dressed. He called to Kjartan and told him not to be in such a hurry. Kjartan turned back, rather slow. The king then took off his own mantle and put it on Kjartan, and told him that he was not to go cloakless back to his men. Kjartan thanked the king for his gift and returned to his men and showed them the mantle. The men were by no means pleased with it all. They thought Kjartan had put himself too much under obligation to the king. Nothing more came of it at the time.

Stormy weather came on in the fall, with frost and a severe cold. The heathen were saying it was no wonder if the weather turned bad that fall. It came of the new-fangled ways of the king and the new faith, all of which made the gods angry. The Icelanders in the town held close together through the winter, and Kjartan was something of a leader among them. In time the weather

improved and then the people gathered together into the town in large numbers at the summons of King Olaf. In the Drontheim country there were many who had taken up with the Christian faith, although there were many more who stood out against it. On a certain day the king called a Thing in the town, down by the beach, and he spoke long and eloquently for the faith. The people of the countryside had an army of men on hand and offered the king a fight in reply. The king told them they ought to know that he had already had to do with more formidable warfare than a fight with the villagers of Drontheim. The countryfolk were scared and threw themselves on the king's mercy, and a large number of them were baptized at that time. So the meeting closed.

That same evening the king sent men privately, with orders to the Icelanders' lodgings to find out what they were saying. So they did. There was a great uproar in the place. Kjartan spoke up and said to Bolli, "How ready are you, Cousin, to take up with this faith which the king is proclaiming?" "I want none of it," said Bolli. "Their religion strikes me as a poor-spirited affair." Kjartan said, "Did it strike you that the king was in any way threatening those persons who refuse to submit to his orders?" "To be sure," said Bolli, "the king seemed to all of us to have come out quite in the open about that, that all such persons are due to get all kinds of hard usage at his hands." "I will take orders from no man," said Kjartan, "so long as I am able to stand on my feet and can get my hands on my weapons. And it also seems to me a cowardly thing to wait and be taken like a lamb out of the sheepfold or a fox out of a trap. I much prefer the other way, since a man must some time die anyway; to strike out and get something done that will be remembered afterward." "What would you do?" said Bolli. "I will be quite plain about it,"

said Kjartan; "I want to burn up the king in his house." "I should say there is nothing small about that," said Bolli; "but it is not likely that it can be done. For I am of opinion that this king is a man of great good luck and of a great destiny; and he also keeps a strong guard about him night and day." Kjartan remarked that most men were likely to stumble at the onset even though they were good and stout men. Bolli replied that it was not easy to say just who might need the spur. Then one and another spoke up and said that all this was useless talk. When the king's spies had heard this much they went their way and told the king all these things that had been said.

The next morning the king called a Thing. To this all the Icelanders were summoned. And when the meeting had been called to order the king stood up and thanked the folks for coming to the meeting, all those who were friendly to him and had accepted the faith. He called up the Icelanders. The king asked if they were willing to be baptized. They had very little to say for it. The king told them they were making a choice which was likely to be all the worse for themselves. "And now, which one of you was it," said he, "who thought it would be a good thing to burn me up in my house?" Then Kjartan spoke up, "You may be thinking that the man who spoke for that move will scarcely be simple enough to own it; but here he is for you to see." "I can see you quite plainly," said the king; "and also that you are not of the humble sort. But you are not fated to rest your feet on my scalp. Indeed you deserve to be given such a lesson that you should never again plot the burning of any more kings. But because I am not sure whether your will goes with your words in all this, and because you have owned up to it like a man, therefore I am not going to have you put to death for what you have done. So also it may turn out that

you will keep the faith all the better for having been more outspoken against it than many others. Also I am aware that it may count for something with your shipmates, so that they too will be likely to accept the faith on the same day when you are baptized without being driven to it. And then, too, it seems likely to me that your folks and friends will listen closely to what you may have to tell them when you get back to Iceland. And I am pretty well persuaded, Kjartan, that you will own a better religion by the time you sail out of Norway than when you came here. Now go your ways in peace and amity, wherever you like. I am not going to coerce you into the Christian faith with pains and penalties at this time; for God himself has said that he will have no one come to him unwillingly." The king's speech was well applauded, though mostly by the Christians. The pagans left it to Kjartan to make such answer as he chose. Then said Kjartan, "We thank you, Sire, for that you grant us peace. In that way, too, you are most likely to draw us into taking up with the faith, by forgiving us such a grave offense and speaking for peace and friendship on this day when you have us as completely in your power as you could wish. And as for me, I count on taking up with your new faith only so far as to make little of Thor next winter when I get back to Iceland." Then said the king, and he smiled with it, "It is plain to be seen that Kjartan has more faith in the strength of his own hands and his weapons than in Thor and Odin." So the Thing ended.

There were those who egged the king on, as time passed, to force Kjartan and his following into confession of the faith, and argued that it was unwise to tolerate such a number of heathens so near his person. This angered the king, and he told them that he believed there were many Christians of less blameless life than Kjartan and his followers; "and such men are worth waiting

long for." The king had many useful works under way that winter. He was having a church built and at the same time was building up the town. This church was finished by Christmas. Then Kjartan proposed to go up near enough to the church to see what the rites of this faith were like which the Christian folk followed. Many of his company fell in with it, saying it would be great sport. So Kjartan went up with his following, and Bolli with him. Hallfred too went along, and many others of the Icelanders. The king spoke for the faith before the multitude, and he spoke at length and very fluently; and the Christians applauded loudly. Now when Kjartan and the rest of them got back to their lodgings there was much talk back and forth about how the king had carried it off on this day; "which the Christians consider to be their next greatest festival. For so said the king in the hearing of us all, that on this night that chieftain was born on whom we are called to believe, if we do as the king tells us." Said Kjartan, "So well did the king impress me the first time I saw him that I knew him at once for a man of mark and of the highest honor; and the like has been the case ever since then, whenever I have seen him at any gathering. But more than ever did he seem right and good to me today; and I am now sure that it is altogether for our best good faithfully to believe Him to be the true God, for whom the king has spoken. And now it can by no means be more to the king's mind to have me take the faith than it is to my mind to be baptized. And this alone hinders my going to see the king right now, that the day is already far gone and the king will already be at the table; and it will take a full day for all of us to be baptized." Bolli fell in with all this directly, and left Kjartan to decide for all concerned.

The talk there had been among Kjartan's company was

told the king before the tables were removed, for he had trusty men in every inn where the pagans were lodged. The king was very much pleased with it, and said, "Kjartan has proved the truth of the saying that 'holidays are happy days.'" Early the next morning when the king was on his way to mass Kjartan met him on the street with a large company. Kjartan saluted the king with great fervor and said that he had an urgent matter to bring before him. The king received him most graciously and said that he already had received the most pleasing reports of what he was after, "and there will be no difficulty about it." Kjartan begged that there should be no delay in seeking the water of baptism, and added that there was great and pressing need of it. The king answered him with a smile, "Indeed, Kjartan," said he, "on this head we should have been at one about the haste even if you had asked for more of it." Hereupon Kjartan and Bolli were baptized, together with all their shipmates and a large number of men besides. This was the second day of Christmas, before mass. The king then invited Kjartan to his Christmas feast, together with his cousin Bolli. It is commonly said that Kjartan was made the king's man on the same day, as soon as they had put off the baptismal white-clothes, together with his cousin Bolli.

Hallfred was not baptized on that day, because he made it a condition that the king himself stand sponsor to him, and the king fixed the time for the next day after. Kjartan and Bolli passed the rest of the winter at King Olaf's court. The king preferred Kjartan above all other men, because of his family as well as of his own personal merit; and it is agreed on all hands that Kjartan was so well beloved at court that he had no enemy among them all. So also they are all agreed that no man the like of Kjartan had ever before come out of Iceland. Bolli,

too, was a stout and gallant man and was thought much of by the best people. So that winter went by, and when spring came around men got themselves ready to go their ways, each as he thought best.

XLI. King Olaf sends Thangbrand out to Iceland; 999.

Kalf Asgeirson went to see Kjartan and asked what his plans were for the summer. Kjartan answered, "I had been thinking that we had best sail for England. The market is good there now for Christian traders. And yet I will have to consult the king before I make up my mind; for he had little to say to my sailing at all when we were talking about it this spring." Kalf then went his way, and Kjartan went to see the king, and saluted him courteously. And the king was gracious and asked what the talk had been about between him and his partner. Kjartan told him what they had been planning, but said also that his own errand was to ask the king's leave to set out. The king replied, "As touches this matter, Kjartan, I will let you choose: Either you will go out to Iceland this summer and break the folks there in under the Christian faith, by force or by reason; or if that enterprise seems too hard a task to you, then I will on no account let go of you. For I consider that you are better off in the service of men of rank than if you turn trader." Kjartan chose to stay with the king rather than go to Iceland to preach the faith; saying that he was not willing to use force against his own kinsfolk; "And it is quite likely that so far as concerns my father and the other leading men who are near kin to me, that they will be no more stubborn about doing as you wish for my being in your hands

and being well used." The king said, "It is wisely and nobly chosen." He then gave to Kjartan full clothing new made out of scarlet cloth. These garments became him well, for men say that they were very much the same stature, King Olaf and Kjartan, when brought under measure.

So King Olaf sent his court chaplain out to Iceland, Thangbrand by name. He sailed to Alftafjord and stayed through the winter with Sidu-Hall at Thvattá, where he preached the faith to the folk both with fair words and with harsh penalties. Thangbrand killed two of those who most opposed him. Hall accepted the faith in the spring and was baptized on the Saturday before Easter, together with all his household. At the same time Gizur the White was also baptized, and Hjalti Skeggjason and many others of the leading men. Yet they were many more who stood out; and the peace was no longer secure between the pagans and the Christians. The chieftains of the countryside met together and came to an understanding that they would kill Thangbrand and those men who were backing him. In the face of this outbreak Thangbrand got away and returned to Norway, went before King Olaf and told him of the adventures he had met with in the course of his expedition, and gave it as his opinion that Christianity could not be established in Iceland. The king was moved to great anger at all this and promised that many an Icelander would have reason to be sorry for it unless they came to reason of their own accord.

That same summer Hjalti Skeggjason was made outlaw at the Althing for blasphemy. It was Runolf Ulfson brought suit against him, a powerful chieftain who lived at Dal below the Eyjafells. Gizur sailed to Norway that summer, and Hjalti with him. They reached Norway and directly went before the king. The king welcomed them graciously, told them they had acquitted

themselves well, and invited them to stay with him. This they accepted. Sverting, the son of Runolf of Dal, had been in Norway the past winter and was intending to sail for Iceland that summer. His ship was already lying alongside the wharf loaded and waiting for the wind. The king refused to let him leave. He ordered that no vessel should sail for Iceland that season. Sverting came before the king and presented his case, begged leave to go and said it would mean a great deal to him not to be forced to unload his cargo. The king told him, and he was angry, "It is a good thing that the idolater's son will be staying where he had rather not." So Sverting did not get away. Nothing to speak of happened that winter.

The following summer the king sent Gizur the White and Hjalti Skeggjason out to Iceland to proclaim the faith once more, and he held back four men as hostages: Kjartan Olafson; Haldor, the son of Gudmund the Great; Kolbein, the son of Thord Freysgodi; and Sverting, the son of Runolf of Dal. Bolli, too, made ready to leave in company with Gizur and Hjalti. He then went to see his cousin Kjartan and told him, "I am now ready to leave. I should wait over next winter for you if you were any more free to leave then than now. But we have all come to believe that the king will by no means let you loose. And then, too, it is believed that you take little thought of anything that might otherwise seem desirable in Iceland, all the while that you are keeping company with the king's sister Ingibjörg." She was then at King Olaf's court, and the most beautiful woman in the country. Kjartan replied, "Let us have none of this talk. But you will carry my greetings to our folks and to all our friends."

XLII. Iceland is christianized; 1000.

So Kjartan and Bolli then took leave of one another. Gizur and Hjalti set sail out of Norway and made a good and speedy passage. They reached the Vestmanna Islands at the time of the Thing and crossed over to the mainland. There they met and talked things over with their kinsfolk, after which they went on up to the Althing and spoke for the faith before the people, at length and eloquently, and all the people of Iceland accepted the faith at that time.

Bolli rode home to Hjardarholt after the Thing in company with his uncle Olaf, and he made him welcome in the most friendly fashion. Bolli rode over to Laugar, to pass the time, after he had been home a little while, and he was well received. Gudrun inquired particularly about his travels, and also about Kjartan. Bolli had a ready answer for everything that Gudrun asked about. He said there was nothing to tell of his own doings, "But as for Kjartan, there is in truth much to be told to his credit. For he is now in King Olaf's court and is preferred above all other men there. But it will not surprise me if we see little of him in this country the next few years." So Gudrun asked if there was any other reason for it, apart from the king's friendship for him. Bolli told her what talk there was about the intimate relations between Kjartan and Ingibjörg, the king's sister, and said that he believed the king would rather see him married to Ingibjörg than let him go,

if it came to a question. Gudrun said this was good news, "but if Kjartan is to be fairly mated he will have to get a good woman." And with that she dropped the talk and left him, flushed and red. But there were those who doubted if she thought the news as good as she said.

Bolli passed the summer at home in Hjardarholt. He had got much renown from this excursion and all his kinsfolk and acquaintance made much of him for his enterprise. Bolli had also brought out a quantity of goods. Often he came to Laugar and talked with Gudrun. And one day Bolli asked Gudrun what her answer would be if he should ask her to marry him. But Gudrun answered swiftly, "You need not talk about anything of the kind, Bolli. I will marry no man so long as I know that Kjartan is living." Bolli replied, "I am inclined to believe you will be sitting at home husbandless for some years if you are to wait for Kjartan. And then, too, he would have had a chance to send some word by me about it if it meant very much to him." They had some words about it, back and forth, and ended with disagreeing. And Bolli rode back home.

XLIII. Of Gudrun's marriage to Bolli.

Shortly after this Bolli had a talk with his uncle Olaf and said to him, "The fact is, uncle, that I have a mind to settle down and take a wife. I consider myself a grown man now. In this matter I wish to get your help in word and deed; for most men in this country will pay attention to anything you have to say." Olaf said, "As for most of the women, I should say that they can ask no more than you have to offer. But you have probably made up your mind where the choice is to fall. Bolli said, "I am not going out of the neighborhood for a wife so long as a good choice lies right near to hand. I mean to ask Gudrun Osvifsdaughter. She is the first among all women." Olaf said, "This is a matter in which I will have no part. It is as well known to you, Bolli, as to me what understanding there has been between Kjartan and Gudrun. But if you are so greatly set on all this, then I will put no hindrance in the way of it, if you can come to terms about it. Have you spoken of this matter to Gudrun?" Bolli said he broached it to Gudrun, once or twice, but that she made little of it. "Still, I believe Osvif will have the most to say in this matter." Olaf told him he would have to go about it as he thought best. Not long after this Bolli set out from home, and with him rode Olaf's sons, Haldor and Steinthor. They were a company of twelve altogether. They rode to Laugar. Osvif and his sons made them welcome. Bolli took Osvif aside and

brought up his suit, and asked his daughter Gudrun in marriage. Osvif answered him in this wise, "The fact is as you are aware, Bolli, that Gudrun is a widow, and it is for her to answer for herself. But I will try to persuade her." Osvif then went to Gudrun and told her that Bolli Thorleikson is there and is asking her to marry him. "Now it is for you to give him an answer. I will tell you at once what I wish, that Bolli is not to be turned away if I have my way about it." Gudrun answered him, "You are deciding this matter quite off hand. Now, Bolli has talked about it to me once before, and I rather held off; and I am of the same opinion still." Then said Osvif, "If so, then many a one will say that it is spoken out of conceit rather than on mature consideration, if you are to refuse such a man as Bolli. Now, so long as I am living it will be for me to take thought and manage for you children of mine in all those things which I know more about than you." So then, seeing that Osvif was so set on it, Gudrun did not make a downright refusal of it, and yet she showed the greatest reluctance through it all. Osvif's sons, too, urged it on her; so much did they count on the advantage of having Bolli for a brother-in-law. So the long and short of all these considerations was that terms were arrived at and pledges given and the wedding-day was fixed for the Winter Nights (late October). Bolli then rode back home to Hjardarholt and told Olaf of this arrangement. He had little to say to it. Bolli stayed at home till the time of the wedding. Bolli invited his kinsman Olaf, and Olaf was in no humor to go, but went after all on Bolli's insistent asking. It was a very fair wedding feast at Laugar. Bolli stayed there through the winter. Their wedded life was not very affectionate, on Gudrun's side.

But when the summer came round ships passed back and forth between the two countries. The tidings from

Iceland then reached Norway that the whole country was Christianized. King Olaf was greatly pleased with this news and gave leave to all those whom he had been holding as hostages to sail to Iceland whenever they chose. Kjartan spoke in answer, for he was foremost among these men who had been held in hostage. "Many thanks! And our choice will be to visit Iceland this summer." Then answered King Olaf, "We will not take back our word, Kjartan, and yet this word was passed to the others rather than to you; for as we should see it, Kjartan, you have been staying here as our friend rather than a hostage. I would rather you had not set your heart on going out to Iceland, even though you have noble kinsfolk in that country. For it is open to you to settle down in Norway in such a station as is not to be had in Iceland." Then answered Kjartan, "May our Lord repay you for the favor which you have shown me since I came into your power! But I am counting on it that you will give me leave, no less than to these others whom you have been holding here for a while past." The king told him it should be as he wished, but he also said that he could scarcely find such another man, outside of the nobility, as Kjartan was.

Kalf Asgeirson had been in Norway over the winter, having returned from England the previous autumn with the ship and trade-goods belonging to Kjartan and himself. And so soon as Kjartan had got his leave for the Iceland-voyage, Kalf and he set about their preparations; and when their ship was ready for the sea, then Kjartan went to see the king's sister Ingibjörg. She received him cordially and made room for him to sit beside her and they fell to talking. Kjartan then told Ingibjörg that he was ready to set sail for Iceland. Then she answered him, "It is our belief, Kjartan, that you have decided on this more out of your own willfulness than because anyone has provoked you to leave Norway and go away

to Iceland." And there were few words passed between them after this. Presently Ingibjörg put out her hand to a mead-tankard standing by her side and brought out of it a white gold-worked bonnet and gave it to Kjartan, and she told him this would be quite good enough for Gudrun Osvifsdaughter to wrap about her head, "and you are to give her the bonnet for a wedding gift. I want the Icelandish women to know that the woman is not slave-born that you have been talking with while in Norway." There was also a satin poke for a covering for the bonnet. It was altogether an ornament of the rarest value. "I shall not be seeing you off at all," said Ingibjörg, "and now farewell, and good luck." Then Kjartan stood up and kissed Ingibjörg, and the story goes that they found it hard to part.

Kjartan then went his way to the king, and told the king that he was then all ready to go. King Olaf saw Kjartan off to the ship, and a large company went down with him. And when they got to the ship where it lay afloat with a single gangplank ashore, then the king spoke up and said, "Here is a sword, Kjartan, which I wish you to take as a parting gift from me. Let this weapon ever keep you company; for I believe that point or edge shall not touch you so long as you carry this sword." It was a noble weapon and richly ornamented. Kjartan thanked the king with many fair words for all the honors and preferment he had shown him while he had been in Norway. Then said the king, "This will I beg of you, Kjartan, that you keep the faith wholly." So then the king and Kjartan took leave of one another with great affection and Kjartan went aboard the ship. The king stood looking out after him and said, "Many things and great are told and expected of Kjartan and his kindred, and yet it will be unhandy to turn aside their destiny."

XLIV. Kjartan returns to Iceland.

So Kjartan and Kalf put to sea. The wind favored them, and they were out but a little while and came into the Hvitá in Borgarfjord. The news spread quickly of Kjartan's coming. His father Olaf heard of it and his other kinsfolk, and they were all glad of it. Olaf at once rode down out of the Dales and south into Borgarfjord, and it was a joyous meeting of father and son. Olaf invited Kjartan home with him with as many men as he chose to bring. Kjartan was glad to accept, and said he was expecting to come there to stay. Olaf then rode back home to Hjardarholt and Kjartan stayed by the ship through the summer. He now heard of Gudrun's marriage, but showed no feeling on that account. Many a one had been somewhat anxious about it beforehand. Gudmund Sölmundarson, Kjartan's brother-in-law, and his sister Thurid came down to the ship. Asgeir Ædikoll, too, came to meet his son Kalf. With him came his daughter Hrefna. She was an uncommonly handsome woman. Kjartan asked his sister Thurid to take anything she liked of the goods, and Kalf did the like by Hrefna. Kalf now opened a large chest and told them to come and see. During the day a sharp squall came up, and Kjartan and Kalf ran out to tie up their ship, and when that was done they returned to the booths. Thurid and Hrefna had nearly emptied the chest. Just then Hrefna brought out the Bonnet and spread it open, and the two were telling each other

that it was a rare treasure. Then Hrefna said she was going to try the Bonnet on. Thurid said that would be all right, and Hrefna then did so. Kalf happened to see it and said they were making a mistake, "for this is the one piece of goods which Kjartan and I do not own in common." And while they were still talking about it Kjartan came into the booth. He had heard what they were saying and broke in and said that did not matter. Hrefna was still wearing the Bonnet. Kjartan looked at her close and sharp and said, "The Bonnet is very becoming, Hrefna," said he, "and I am thinking that I had best own both the Bonnet and the girl." But Hrefna said, "It is the talk that you are not likely to marry in a hurry, and that you will have to get any woman you ask." Kjartan replied that it made no great difference whom he married but that he should wait long for nobody. Hrefna took the Bonnet off and handed it to Kjartan and he put it away.

Gudmund and Thurid invited Kjartan to visit them in the north in the winter, and Kjartan promised to come. Kalf Asgeirson was going north with his father. So Kjartan and he dissolved partnership, and all was settled fairly and amicably. Kjartan too left the ship and rode away westward into the Dales. They were a company of twelve. So Kjartan came back home to Hjardarholt and was made welcome by them all. Kjartan had his goods carried home from the ship in the fall. The twelve of them all stayed at Hjardarholt over winter. Olaf and Osvif held to their settled way of visiting back and forth; each was the other's guest every other autumn.

Now Gudrun spoke to Bolli; that she believed he had not told her the whole truth about Kjartan's coming back from Norway. But Bolli said he had told the truth according to the best of his knowledge and belief. Gudrun had little to say about all this, but it was plain to

be seen that she did not like it. And the common talk was that she still was very fond of Kjartan, however much she covered it over.

This year the autumn feast was to be at Laugar. Olaf and the Hjardarholt folk were to be the guests. And the time now was coming on when the autumn festival was due at Laugar. Olaf made his preparations and asked Kjartan to come with him. Kjartan said he would stay at home and look after the farm. Olaf begged him not to bear a grudge and fall out with his own kinsfolk. "Keep this in mind, Kjartan, that there is no one whom you have loved as well as your foster-brother Bolli. My wish is to have you come along. You will quickly make up with your cousin if the two of you get together." Kjartan did what his father asked, and he now got out his dress of scarlet cloth which King Olaf had given him at the leave-taking, and dressed with great care and elegance. He girded himself with the sword given him by the king. On his head he wore a gold-inlaid helmet and he carried on his flank a red shield on which was displayed the holy cross drawn in gold. He carried in his hand a lance of which the socket was gold-inlaid. All his men were in dyed garments. There were between twenty or thirty of them altogether. So now they ride out of Hjardarholt, and rode on their way till they came to Laugar. There there was a large gathering awaiting them.

XLV. Kjartan marries Hrefna and gives her the Bonnet.

Bolli came forward to receive Olaf and his company, together with Osvif's sons, and greeted them courteously. Bolli went to meet Kjartan, and kissed him. Kjartan returned the greeting. After this they were conducted within doors. Bolli was very merry at this time. Olaf was greatly pleased with him, but Kjartan rather held off. The feast went merrily on. Bolli was the owner of a stud of horses which were rated as the very best. The stallion was a large and beautiful animal and had never been beaten in a matched fight. He was of a white color, with red ears and forelock. With him there went three mares, of the same colour as the horse. These horses Bolli presented to Kjartan, but Kjartan said he was no horse fancier, and would not accept them. Olaf begged him to accept the horses, "for these are a very honorable gift." Kjartan returned a flat No. They parted company after that in no friendly humor, and the Hjardarholt folks went home. And now everything was quiet.

Kjartan was rather moody through the winter. The folks got little talk from him. Olaf took this sorely to heart. That winter after Christmas Kjartan set out from home with a company of twelve men to go up into the north country. They rode on their way till they came into Vididal up north, to Asbjarnarnes, and there Kjartan was welcomed with the greatest friendli-

ness and courtesy. The housing on the place was most excellent. Hall Gudmundson was then about twenty years old. He strongly favored his Laxdal kin. It is the common report that a finer man in all respects has not been known in all the north Quarter. Hall welcomed his uncle Kjartan with great affection.

Presently games were got under way at Asbjarnarnes and people gathered in from far and wide about the countryside. They came from the Vididal and from Midfjord, from Vatznes and from the Vatzdal, and all the way from Langadal. It was a very large gathering. And the talk among them all ran on how greatly Kjartan excelled all the rest. Then the games were begun, and Hall took the lead. He called on Kjartan to come in. "We beg you to do it as a favor to us, cousin." Kjartan said, "I have not been in training right lately; other things were made more of at King Olaf's court. But I am not going to refuse for this once." So then Kjartan made ready. The stoutest men among them were matched against him. And so the games ran on through the day. And no man among them had come up to Kjartan either for strength or skill. And in the evening, when the games were over, Hall Gudmundson stood up and spoke, "This is my father's wish and petition, that all those of you who have come from any distance will be our guests here overnight, and take up the sport again in the morning." There was much applause at this message, and the invitation was considered a magnificent one.

Kalf Asgeirson was come to the games, and was very friendly with Kjartan. His sister Hrefna too was there, and was decked out with much finery. There were more than a hundred (120) persons on the place overnight. Next day the games were taken up again. Kjartan sat by and looked on. His sister Thurid came and talked to him and said this: "Brother, I am told that you have

been quite moody all winter long. The folks are saying that you have been grieving about Gudrun. And the folks believe it all the more because there is no longer any friendliness between your cousin Bolli and you; and you two had always been such close friends. Now, turn to and do what is right and reasonable, and make no more of this thing than you have to. Take the advice of your own people. We have been thinking that the best thing to do would be for you to take a wife just as you said last summer, although it may be that Hrefna is not altogether an even match for you. Indeed that is something you will not find in this country. Her father Asgeir is a man of mark and of good birth, and he also does not lack the means with which to make this match a handsome one. Another daughter of his is also married to a man of some consequence, and you have yourself told me that Kalf Asgeirson is the finest kind of a man. Altogether they are of the best people. I wish very much that you would have a talk with Hrefna. And I believe you will find that she has brains to match her beauty." Kjartan took it all in good part and told her that she spoke very much to the point. So it was arranged for him to see Hrefna, and they spent the day together. In the evening Thurid asked Kjartan what he thought of Hrefna. He spoke very kindly of her; saying that she was in every way a very accomplished woman, so far as he could see. The morning next following messengers were sent to Asgeir asking him to come to Asbjarnarnes. It was then talked over between them, and Kjartan then asked Hrefna Asgeirsdaughter in marriage. He answered favorably, for he was a sensible man and well able to see what an honorable offer had been made them. Kalf was very much in favor of it, "I will spare nothing to bring it about." Hrefna, too, made no objection, on her part, and left it all to her father's decision. So the affair was brought to a

conclusion and an agreement was made in the presence of witnesses. Kjartan would content himself with nothing else but that the wedding was to be at Hjardarholt. Asgeir and Kalf made no objection to that. So then it was arranged that the wedding was to take place at Hjardarholt by the end of five weeks of summer. Kjartan then rode away home, with large presents given him on leaving. Olaf was much pleased with the news, for Kjartan was much merrier now than before he left home.

Kjartan fasted through Lent, taking no solid food, and in this he did what no man had done before him. It was a wonder in all men's eyes that Kjartan lived so long a time without food, so that people came from far away to see him. In such like fashion did Kjartan surpass other men also in other things. So Easter came and passed. After that Kjartan and Olaf set about their preparations for a great wedding feast. Asgeir and Kalf came down from the North at the time bespoken, together with Gudmund and Hall, and altogether they were a company of sixty persons. Kjartan's folks had also gathered a large company to welcome them. The wedding was a sumptuous affair, for the feasting lasted through the week. Kjartan gave Hrefna the Bonnet for a wedding gift; and this gift became famous, for there was no one there present of such wide knowledge or such great wealth as to have ever seen or owned so valuable an ornament. And the wise ones have related that there was as much as eight ounces of gold woven into the fabric of the Bonnet. And Kjartan was in such gay spirits at the wedding that he entertained everybody with his pleasantries, telling them of his adventures. And the folks were greatly moved with the many notable things he had to tell of, for he had long been in the service of the most illustrious chieftain, King

Olaf Tryggvason. And when the gathering broke up Kjartan gave handsomely chosen presents to Gudmund and Hall and to the other great ones present. Father and son gained great good fame by this wedding feast. Kjartan and Hrefna came to love one another well.

XLVI. Of the feast at Hjardarholt, and of the theft of the Sword and the Bonnet.

Olaf and Osvif held to their friendship as before, even though there was some hard feeling between the younger folks. This year Olaf gave a banquet at his home a fortnight before the coming of winter. And Osvif at the same time had made preparations for a feast at the Winter Nights.[1] So each of them invited the other to come to the feast with as large a company as either thought would do him the most honor. It was Osvif's turn to come first to the feast at Olaf's, and he came to Hjardarholt at the appointed time. In his company were Bolli and Gudrun and Osvif's sons. Next morning when the company were on their way down the length of the hall, one of the serving-women raised the question, in what order the women guests were to be seated at table. It so happened that Gudrun was just then coming along opposite the closet-bed in which Kjartan usually slept. At that time Kjartan was dressing and was just putting on his red scarlet coat. And Kjartan then spoke to the woman who asked about the order of seating, as no one else spoke up, and told her, "Hrefna is to sit in the highseat. And she is to bear the honors before them all, so long as I am alive." But up to this time Gudrun had always sat in the highseat,

[1] About the middle of October; the beginning of winter.

at Hjardarholt and elsewhere. Gudrun heard what was said and looked up at Kjartan, and she changed color but said nothing. Next day Gudrun talked with Hrefna and asked her to put on the Bonnet and let the folks see this most notable ornament that had ever come to Iceland. Kjartan was there, though not right near, and had overheard what Gudrun was saying. He was quicker to find an answer than Hrefna. "She will not deck herself out with the Bonnet in this company. For it means more to me that Hrefna has got the best there is than to make a spectacle of it for the crowd of guests today." This autumn festival at Olaf's was to last a week's time. On the next day following Gudrun talked again with Hrefna privately and asked her to let her see the Bonnet. She consented. Later in the day they went out to the storehouse where valuable things were kept. Hrefna then opened a chest and brought out a satin poke, and out of the poke she took out the headdress and showed it to Gudrun. She spread it open and looked it over for a while and said nothing, neither good nor bad. Presently Hrefna put the Bonnet away and they went back to their places in the hall. And so time passed in sport and merrymaking.

Now on the day when the guests were taking leave and riding away, Kjartan was taken up with looking after horses and riding-gear for such of them as had come a long ways and needed anything of the kind. Kjartan had not been carrying his sword, the king's gift, about with him while he was looking after these things; although it was his habit very rarely to leave it out of his reach. Afterwards he went to his closet-bed, where he had left the sword, and it was then gone. He went directly to his father and told him. Olaf said, "We will go about this very quietly; and I will get men to go along and keep watch of every crowd as they ride away." And so he did.

Án the White was to ride along with Osvif's folks and keep watch of anyone who might go off to the side or fall behind. They were riding up country by way of Ljárskog, past the farmstead known as In-the-Skog, and they made a stop here at Skog and dismounted. Osvif's son Thorolf with several others went off to one side, away from the farmstead. They disappeared into a clump of underbrush while the halt was made at Skog. Án kept company with the riders as far as the Laxá river, where it comes down out of the Sælingsdal, and there he took leave of them to turn back. Thorolf let him know that it would have been quite all right even if he had not come with them at all. During the previous night a very light snow had fallen, so that it was easy trailing. Án rode back to the Ljárskog woods and followed Thorolf's trail down to a certain spring or marshy place. There he groped about under water and put his hand on the sword-hilts. Án wanted witnesses to this affair, and so he rode back to Thorarin, at the Sælingsdal Tunga, and he went back with Án to see him take up the sword. Án thereupon carried the sword to Kjartan. Kjartan wrapped it in cloth and laid it away in a chest. The place is known as the Sword-Well where Thorolf thrust the king's-gift into hiding. Nothing was done about this, but the scabbard was never found again. Kjartan was more careful of the sword after this than before. Kjartan took all this to heart and was not willing to let it pass. But Olaf told him, "Let not this thing trouble you. They have turned a mean trick; but it is really no matter. Let us not be made sport of for making a feud out of all this, in such a case where we have to do with our own friends and kinsfolk." And on Olaf's advice Kjartan let it pass.

Presently it was Olaf's turn to go as a guest to the Winter-Nights festival to be held at Laugar, and he spoke to Kjartan about it and asked him to come along.

Kjartan held back, but still he agreed to go at his father's insistence. Hrefna was to go, too, and was for leaving the Bonnet at home. But her mother-in-law Thorgerd asked her the question, "When are you to make use of such a splendid ornament if it is to be left locked up at home while you go visiting?" Hrefna answered, "There are those who say that I could quite easily go to places where there are fewer to envy me than at Laugar." Thorgerd said, "We need not believe much of what anyone says who carries tales of that kind between neighbors." And so, seeing that Thorgerd was obstinately set on it, Hrefna wore the Bonnet; and Kjartan made no objection when he saw that his mother would have it so.

So then they set out and reached Laugar by nightfall and there they were welcomed cordially. Thorgerd and Hrefna handed over their wraps to be taken care of. But next morning, when the women were dressing, Hrefna looked for the Bonnet and it was then gone from the place where she had left it for safe-keeping. Search was made for it all over the place but it was not found. Gudrun said it was most likely the Bonnet had been left at home, or she might have been careless about it and dropped it somewhere. Hrefna then told Kjartan that the Bonnet had disappeared. He gave her the answer that it was not easy to keep an eye on these folks and asked her to let it pass. Then he told his father how the game was going. Olaf told him, "Once more I would have you do as before. Let it lie. Put up with the trouble and say nothing. I will look into this thing on the quiet. There is nothing I would not do to keep the peace between Bolli and you. Prevention is easier than cure, my son," said he. Kjartan replied, "It is quite plain, Father, that you wish everybody well. And yet, I don't know if I am willing to stand out of the way for these Lauga-folks at every turn."

On the day when the guests were taking their leave after the feast, Kjartan spoke up and said, "I hereby call on you to take notice, Cousin Bolli, that I count on you to deal more honestly with us hereafter than hitherto. I may as well speak out about it. For there already are many who know about these things that have been disappearing hereabout, and that we have reason to believe have found their way into your keeping. This fall, when we gave a feast at Hjardarholt, a sword of mine was taken. That came back, but not the scabbard. And now here again another article has been lost which would be considered to have value. And now I want both of them returned." Then said Bolli, "We are not at fault in these things that you charge us with, Kjartan. We might have looked for anything else from you, but not that you should be charging us with stealing." Kjartan replied, "We have reason to believe that there have been those persons concerned in this affair, for whom it is for you to make amends if you are so inclined. You have been crowding us more than there is any call for. We have long been trying to keep out of trouble with you. But I am now telling you openly that it will not do." Then Gudrun spoke up in answer to him and said, "You are raking up a fire now, Kjartan, which had better not be smoking. And then, even if it is as you say, that there are certain persons here who have taken pains to have the Bonnet disappear, then I should consider that such persons have only come into their own. You may believe anything you like about what has become of the headdress; but for my part, I am not sorry if it has been taken care of in such fashion that the Bonnet will not beautify Hrefna any more from this time on." After this they parted, with some ill-will. The Hjardarholt folks rode back home. The banquetings fell off after this. Still there might be said to be

peace. No trace of the Bonnet was ever found. There were many who believed that Thorolf had burned it up at his sister Gudrun's instigation. Asgeir Ædikoll died in the early part of that winter. His sons took over his goods and possessions.

XLVII. Of Kjartan's raid to Laugar, and of the bargain for the Tunga lands.

Along in the winter after Christmas Kjartan gathered some men together. There were some sixty of them altogether. Kjartan did not tell his father what this expedition was about. And Olaf asked few questions about it. Kjartan took tents and provisions. So Kjartan rode on his way till he reached Laugar. He ordered his men to dismount and told off some of them to look after their horses and others to set up the tents. At that time the common usage was that the places of retreat were out-of-doors and some little way from the dwellings, and so it was at Laugar. Kjartan put a guard on every door on the place and barred all persons from going out, and so made them do all errands of nature within-doors for three days' time. When this had been done Kjartan rode back home to Hjardarholt, and his men each to his own home.

Olaf disapproved of these doings. Thorgerd said there was nothing to blame, and said also that the Lauga-folks had duly merited all or more than this indignity. Then Hrefna spoke, "Did you have any talk with anyone at Laugar, Kjartan?" There was little of the kind, said he, although Bolli and he had exchanged a few words. And Hrefna told him, with a laugh, "It has been told me for a fact that you had some talk with Gudrun, and

I have even heard what she was wearing; that she had decked herself out with the Bonnet, and that it becomes her extremely well." Kjartan replied, and he went very red as he said it, so that he was plainly hurt at her making light of it in this way, "None of this that you are telling of came before my eyes, Hrefna," said Kjartan. "Gudrun does not have to deck herself out with your Bonnet to be lovelier than all other women." Hrefna had nothing more to say about it.

The Lauga-folks were feeling hurt, and they felt this thing to have been worse and more shameful than if Kjartan had killed a man or two of them. The sons of Osvif were most wrought up about it, while Bolli rather slowed them down. Gudrun had least to say about it, and yet it appeared from what she did have to say that it was very doubtful if anyone else was more taken up with it than she. So it came to open hostility between the Lauga-folks and those of Hjardarholt. Toward the end of winter Hrefna gave birth to a child. It was a boy and was named Asgeir.

Thorarin, the farmer at Tunga, gave notice that he wished to sell the Tunga lands. The reason was both that he was getting to be short of livestock and also that he felt there was too much of a quarrel coming to a head in the neighborhood, and he was a friend of both sides. Bolli wanted to buy himself a place, because the Lauga-folks were short of land and had much livestock. Bolli and Gudrun rode over to Tunga, at Osvif's advice. He urged that it would come right handy for them to take over this land which lay right next to their own, and advised them to let no little thing stand in their way. They talked the trade over with Thorarin and came to an agreement about the price to be paid as well as what was included in the sale, and a bargain was made between Thorarin and Bolli. But the sale was not formally closed before witnesses, because there were

not such a number of persons present as to have made it legally binding. When this was done Bolli and Gudrun rode back home.

Now when Kjartan Olafson heard of this he set out at once with a company of twelve men and came to Tunga early in the day. Thorarin made him welcome and asked him to stay. But Kjartan said he would have to get back home that evening, but would be stopping for a while. Thorarin asked where he was going and what for. And Kjartan answered him, "I have come here to see you about a certain land-sale which Bolli and you have been arranging. Because I do not like to have you sell this land to Bolli and Gudrun." Thorarin said it would be quite inconvenient for him not to, "for the price is very good which Bolli has agreed to pay for the land, and it is to be paid down." Kjartan told him, "You will lose nothing by it, even if Bolli does not buy the land, because I will buy it of you at the same price. And it will do you no good to raise many objections to what I want you to do; for this is to be noted, that I intend to come first in this countryside, and at the same time I intend to come closer to what others wish than the Lauga-folks are in the habit of doing." Thorarin replied, "'Mighty is the Master's word' for me in this affair. Yet I should prefer to let this bargain stand just as Bolli and I have agreed." Kjartan told him, "I would not call it a sale of land so long as it is not bound by witnesses. Now it is for you to do one thing or the other; give me handsel of the land at once on the same terms to which you have agreed with others, or else go on living on your land yourself." Thorarin chose to sell him the land. The sale was now made formally before witnesses. Kjartan rode back home after this land-sale. The news of this was told over all the valleys of Breidafjord. The news reached Laugar that same evening. Then Gudrun re-

marked, "It looks to me, Bolli, as if Kjartan is giving you the choice between two things, either of which is harder than those he put up to Thorarin. Either you will have to move out of this neighborhood, with little credit, or else you will have to show yourself somewhat bolder when you two meet again than you have been heretofore." Bolli answered nothing at all, and went off without any further talk. And everything was quiet through the rest of Lent.

On the third day of Easter Kjartan left home, with one man. It was Black Án went with him. They reached Tunga the same day. Kjartan was expecting Thorarin to ride with him out into Saurbæ to take acceptance of certain debts outstanding; for Kjartan had large payments coming to him in that neighborhood. Meantime Thorarin had ridden over to a neighboring farm. So Kjartan stopped over for a while and waited for him. Thorhalla Málga (Garrulous) happened to be there the same day. She asked Kjartan which way he was going. He said he was going out west into Saurbæ. She asked what road he would take. Kjartan answered, "I am riding west by way of Sælingsdal, and east again by way of Svinadal." She asked how long he was likely to be gone. Kjartan answered, "It is most likely that I will be coming east again on Friday." "Will you do an errand for me?" said Thorhalla. "I have a relative in Saurbæ, west of Hvitadel. He has promised me half-a-mark's worth of *wadmal*. I wish you would call for it and bring it home with you." Kjartan promised to do so. Then Thorarin came home and they set out together. They rode into the West by way of the Sælingsdal moors and came to Hol by nightfall, to the two brothers Thorkel and Knut and their sister Aud. Kjartan was very well received there, for they were very good friends.

Thorhalla the Talker came back home to Laugar the

same evening. The Osvifsons asked if she had seen anyone during the day. She said she had seen Kjartan Olafson. They asked where he was going. She told them all she knew, "and never has he cut a better figure than now. And indeed it is no wonder if such men as he think all else small and mean beside themselves." And Thorhalla went on to say, "It struck me, too, that there was nothing else Kjartan was so ready to talk about as the land he bought of Thorarin." Gudrun spoke up, "Kjartan may well dare to do anything he likes. For it has already been proved that he can go to no such lengths that anyone will dare to poke a stick at him." Both Bolli and the Osvifsons were there and heard what Gudrun said. They had little to say, and mostly by way of annoying Bolli, as was usually the case. Bolli pretended to hear nothing, as usual when Kjartan was being vilified, for that was the usual way with him.

XLVIII. Of the Osvifsons waylaying Kjartan.

KJARTAN spent the third day of Easter at Hol. There was much sport and merrymaking. Án was restless and groaned in his sleep that night, and they woke him. They asked what he had been dreaming. He answered, "There came a woman to me, an ugly old woman, and pulled me out on the bed-rail. She had a cutlass in one hand and a handful of brambles in the other. She drove the cutlass into my chest and then ripped open my belly all the way down and took out the entrails and put brambles in place of them. After that she went out," said Án. Kjartan and the others had a good laugh at his dream and nicknamed him Án Bramblebelly. They tumbled him about and handled him, as they said, to look for the brambles in his belly. But Aud told them, "There is no use of making so much of a joke about it. I want to say that Kjartan had best do one thing or the other; either stay over here for a longer time, or else, if he is bound to go, then he ought to ride out of here with a larger company than he came here with." Kjartan said, "May be you think Án Bramblebelly is speaking words of wisdom while he is talking the days away in this fashion, and that all this is to be taken for sound sense. But I expect to go on my way just as I have intended, for all of this dream." Kjartan set out for home early Friday morning of Easter week, together with Thorkel Hvelp (the Puppy) and his brother

Knut, who went with him at Aud's instance. They were a company of twelve men who rode out with Kjartan on the way. Kjartan took the way by Hvitadal and called there for Thorhalla's homespun, as he had promised; after which he rode on south by way of Svinadal.

Now this is what took place at Laugar in Sælingsdal. Gudrun was up and afoot as soon as the sun was risen. She went to where her brothers were sleeping. She put her hand on Ospak. He quickly was awake, and so were the other brothers. And when Ospak saw it was his sister he asked her what she was out for so early. Gudrun said she wanted to know what they were going to do that day. Ospak said they would be lying idle and that there was little work in hand just then. Gudrun told them, "You are blest with right good tempers, if you had only been the daughters of some nice farmer, doing nothing, neither to help or hinder. With all the insult and shame that Kjartan has put upon you, you still sleep on the same as ever while he is riding by your door-yard with one man in company. Such folks as you are highly gifted with hog-sense. I should say there is small chance of your daring to go after Kjartan at home if you dare not face him now, when he is on the road with a single man or all alone, while you are sitting around at home and talking nicely and are too many for any use." Ospak told her she was making too much of it, though he could not well argue the case, and he got up at once and got into his clothes, and so did his brothers all together. They then made ready to waylay Kjartan. Then Gudrun called on Bolli to go with them. Bolli held back and said it was not the right thing for him to do, being a near kinsman of Kjartan's, and called to mind how kindly Olaf had brought him up. Gudrun told him, "What you are saying is quite right. But you will never have the good fortune to please everybody.

And there is an end of things between us two if you shirk this job." And so, with Gudrun's pleading, Bolli made the most of his hatred of Kjartan and the outstanding quarrel and took to his weapons in all haste. They made up a company of nine altogether. There were five of the Osvifsons: Ospak and Helgi, Vandrád, Torrád and Thorolf; sixth Bolli; seventh Gudlaug, Osvif's sister's son and a right proper man; and there were Odd and Stein, sons of Thorhalla the Talker. They rode out into Svinadal and took up their place in the gully known as the Hafragil ("Billygoat Gully"). There they tied their horses and sat down to wait. Bolli was silent all day and lay by himself upon the brink of the gorge.

Now, when Kjartan and his company were past Mjosynd on their way south, where the valley begins to widen out, Kjartan told Thorkel and his men that they might as well turn back. Thorkel said they would go on as far as where the valley ends. But when they had got on south past the dairies known as the North-Sel Kjartan again spoke to the two brothers and told them to ride no further; "Thorolf the Thief is not going to laugh at me for not daring to ride out by myself." Thorkel Hvelp then said, "We will do as you say, and ride no further with you. But we shall be sorry not to have been with you if you should need help today." Then said Kjartan, "My cousin Bolli is not likely to join in any plot to kill me; and if the Osvifsons waylay me it is by no means certain who will live to tell of it, even though the odds are against me." So the two brothers and their men turned back and rode away into the West.

XLIX. Of Kjartan's death; 1003.

Now Kjartan rides along southward down the valley, the three of them together, himself and Black Án and Thorarin.

Thorkel was the name of a man who lived at Hafratindar ("Billygoat Buttes") in Svinadal ("Hog-vale"). The place is waste now. He had been out looking to his horses during the day, and his shepherd with him. They caught sight of both parties, both the Lauga-men lying in wait and Kjartan riding down the valley, the three of them together. Then the herdsboy spoke up and said that they had better go to meet Kjartan and his men; said it would be a great piece of luck if they could head off such a mischief as this that was then coming on. Thorkel told him, "Keep still! Do you think that a fool like you can save any man's life if it is his fate to die? And the fact is, too, that I am quite willing to let them do each other as much damage as they like. It strikes me that we had better look for a place where we will be out of harm's way and still be able to see everything and get some sport out of their game. They all say that Kjartan is the best swordsman ever; and my guess is that he will need it all this time. The odds against him are good enough." And Thorkel had his way about it.

Kjartan's party came riding down to the Hafragil. But on the other side the Osvifsons were beginning to have doubts about Bolli, why he was taking a position

where he could easily be seen by anyone riding in from the west. They talked about it among themselves and doubted if Bolli would keep faith with them. They went up the bank to where he lay and got into a wrestling game with him, and took him by the heels and dragged him down the bank. Meantime Kjartan and his men were coming on fast, for they were riding at a run, and just as they got by the mouth of the ravine they caught sight of the ambush and recognised the men. Kjartan jumped out of the saddle at once and turned to meet the Osvifsons. There was a large boulder near by, and there Kjartan made a stand. But before they came hand to hand he shot his spear and struck Thorolf's shield just over the handstrap. The shield was thrown to one side by the blow, and the spear ran through the shield and through the arm above the elbow and cut the great muscle. Thorolf let go the shield, and he had no use of his arm the rest of the day. Then Kjartan drew his sword, but it was not the king's-gift. The sons of Thorhalla fell upon Thorarin; that was the share which had been assigned them. It was a hard fight, for Thorarin was a stout man, and it was not easy to say which would come out ahead. The Osvifsons and Gudlaug set upon Kjartan. They were six to Kjartan's and Án's two. Án fought well and was forever putting himself forward to cover Kjartan. Bolli stood off to one side with Fotbit in his hand. Kjartan laid on mightily, but his sword was a poor tool. Time and again he had to tread on the blade to straighten it. Both the Osvifsons and Án were wounded, but Kjartan had not yet been touched. Kjartan fought so fast and furiously that the Osvifsons backed away from him and then turned on Án. Then Án went down, after he had been fighting for some time with his entrails coming out. Just then Kjartan cut off Gudlaug's leg, above the knee, which was enough to kill him. Then

the four Osvifsons again set on Kjartan, but he fought them off so stoutly that he lost no ground before them. And then Kjartan called out, "Cousin Bolli, what did you leave home for if you are going to stand by and do nothing? You had better help out on one side or the other, and let us see what Fotbit is good for." Bolli stood by as if he had heard nothing. But when presently Ospak saw that they were not getting the better of Kjartan he turned to Bolli and egged him on in every way he could. He told him that he would never want to face the shame of having undertaken to help them out and then failed them in their need. "Kjartan bore down on us hard enough before, when we had given him no such cause as this, and if Kjartan is to get off again now, then there will be nothing but swift ruin for both you and the rest of us." Then at length Bolli drew Fotbit and faced Kjartan. Then said Kjartan to Bolli, "Now you are turning your hand to a coward's job, Cousin. But as for me, I will much rather be killed by you, my Cousin, than to kill you." Kjartan then threw down his weapons and refused to guard himself. He still had been hurt but very little, although he was all tired out with the fighting. Bolli had nothing to say to Kjartan's words. Still he killed him. Bolli caught him in his arms when he fell, and Kjartan died lying on Bolli's knees.

Bolli was sorry for it as soon as it was done, and he called them to witness that he was answerable for this man's death. Bolli sent the Osvifsons back home, while Thorarin and he stayed behind with the dead. And when the Osvifsons got home to Laugar they told the news. Gudrun praised the deed. Thorolf's wounded arm was then bound up, and he never had the full use of it afterward. Kjartan's dead body was carried home to Tunga. After that Bolli rode back home to Laugar.

Gudrun went out to meet him and asked how things

were getting on. Bolli answered that it was then near nones of that day. And Gudrun told him, "It has been a famous day's work. I have spun yarn for a twelve-ell's web and you have killed Kjartan." Bolli said, "It will take me long enough to forget that mistake, even without your reminding me of it." Gudrun replied, "That is not what I would call a mistake. It has seemed to me that you were more thought of the winter Kjartan was in Norway than while he has been walking over you since he came back to Iceland. But I am telling you last of what pleases me the most, that Hrefna will not be laughing when she goes to bed tonight." Then Bolli answered her, and he was very angry by that time, "I have my doubts whether she will turn paler at these tidings than you. And I am not sure that it would not have shocked you less if we had all been left dead in the fight and Kjartan had brought you the news of it." By this time Gudrun could see that Bolli's temper was rising, and she went on to say, "Don't tell me anything like that. Indeed, I thank you very much for what you have done. I am sure now that you are not willing to do anything that is annoying to me."

The Osvifsons went into hiding in an underground chamber that had been built for them secretly beforehand, and the sons of Thorhalla were sent away out to Helgafell to tell Snorri Godi these tidings and also to beg him to send help speedily to strengthen them against Olaf and any others who might call them to account for the killing of Kjartan.

At Tunga, during the night following the day on which the manslaughter had taken place, this happened, that Án, whom everybody believed to be dead, suddenly sat up. This startled those who were waking with the dead, and they thought it a great marvel. But Án called to them, "I beg you in the name of God, don't get scared at me. I have been alive and had my wits about me all

the while until I fell into a faint. Then I dreamed that that same woman came back again as before, and this time she took the briars out of my belly and put the entrails back in their place, and I felt much better for the change." After this the wounds which Án had got were bound up and he got well again; and from that time he was called Án Bramblebelly.

When Olaf Höskuldson heard these tidings he took Kjartan's death very much to heart; yet he bore it like a man. His sons were for setting out at once and killing Bolli. But Olaf said, "Far be it! It will not bring me back my son even if Bolli is killed. Kjartan was more to me than all the rest, but I will have no harm done to Bolli. But I will tell you of another business that should suit you better. Go after the Thorhöllusons, who have been sent out to Helgafell to bring help to the Osvifsons. I shall be quite content to have you do them any mischief you like." Thereupon the Olafsons set out in all haste on a lugger belonging to Olaf. There were seven of them in the company. They rowed out along the Hvamsfjord and they pushed on strongly. They had a light wind and favorable. They pushed on until they were under the lee of Skorrey. There they lay to for a while and made inquiries to find out who had been passing. Presently they caught sight of a boat coming up along the west shore of the fjord. They recognised the men very soon. They were the Thorhöllusons. Haldor Olafson and his men drove at them right away, and there was no defense, for the Olafsons boarded them with a rush. Stein and his brother were taken in hand and were beheaded at the boat's gunwale and thrown overboard. The Olafsons then turned back; and it was considered to be very good work.

L. Of the composition for the killing of Kjartan.

Olaf went out to meet Kjartan's dead body on the way. He also sent word down south to Borg to tell the tidings to Thorstein Egilson, and to tell him also that he counted on him for backing to prosecute and follow up, in case any of the great men should take sides with the Osvifsons against him. In such a case, he said, he should want to hold everything in his own hands. The same kind of a message he sent into the North, to Vididal, to his son-in-law Gudmund and the Asgeirsons. At the same time he told them that he had laid charges for Kjartan's death against all the men who took part in the assault; with the exception of Ospak Osvifson. He was already outlaw on account of a certain woman by the name of Aldis; she was a daughter of Holmgöngu-Ljot (Ljot the Duellist), of Ingjaldsand; their son was Ulf, who afterward became Lord Marshal under King Harald Sigurdson (Harold Hardrede), and who married Jorunn Thorbergsdaughter; their son was John, the father of Erlend Himaldi, father of Eystein the Archbishop. Olaf had laid charges for manslaughter to come up at the Thorsnes Thing. He had Kjartan's body brought home and put up a tent over it; for at that time there had no church been built in the countryside of the Dales.

So soon as Olaf got word that Thorstein had set out at once and was coming on with a strong force, and that

the folks from Vididal were doing the same; then Olaf sent out a call to gather men together from all over the Dales. This made a very large body of men. Olaf then sent the whole of this force of men on to Laugar and told them, "This is my wish, that you are to protect Bolli, in case of need, no less stoutly than you stand by me; for I am persuaded that they think they have an account of their own to settle with him, these men from outside who will now be on our hands right soon." And directly when this had been arranged in this fashion, both Thorstein and the Vididal folks came on, and they were all furious. Hall Gudmundson and the Asgeirsons were all for going after Bolli at once and making a search for the Osvifsons until they were found, for they were sure they had not left the neighborhood. But inasmuch as Olaf spoke very strongly against their going, negotiations were presently opened for a peaceable settlement between them; which was easily arranged so far as concerned Bolli, in that he put his case in Olaf's hands without reserve. And Osvif could see no chance to make an objection, seeing that no help was coming to him from Snorri. So arrangements were made for a meeting to settle the terms of composition, to take place at Ljárskog. The whole case fell into Olaf's hands without reservation. Such redress was to be made for the slaying of Kjartan as Olaf might decide, both in fines and in outlawry. Then the meeting broke up. Bolli did not come to the meeting and for that reason Olaf decided that the award would be made known at the Thorsnes Thing. The Myra-folks and those from the Vididal then rode in to Hjardarholt. Thorstein Kuggason offered to adopt Kjartan's son Asgeir as his foster-son, for Hrefna's comfort. And Hrefna then went home with her brothers into the North, in great sorrow. Yet she bore her grief with such courtesy that she was ever fair-spoken and

cheerful with all the folks. Hrefna took no husband after Kjartan. She lived but a little while after she came back into the North Country, and the story goes that she died of grief.

LI. The Osvifsons are outlawed and leave the country.

KJARTAN'S body lay in state for a week at Hjardarholt. Thorstein Egilson had built a church at Borg. He carried Kjartan's body back home with him, and Kjartan was buried at Borg. The church was at that time newly consecrated and was still draped in white.

The time for the Thorsnes Thing presently came round. The case of the Osvifsons was then brought up and they were all outlawed. Composition was paid to make them lawfully transportable out of the country, but without the right to return to Iceland so long as any of Olaf's sons were living, or Kjartan's son Asgeir; while the life of Osvif's nephew Gudlaug was adjudged forfeit for his part in the waylaying and assault on Kjartan, and no satisfaction was awarded Thorolf for the injuries which he had received. Olaf would not prosecute Bolli, and called on him instead to pay a composition. This was a very sore matter to Haldor and Steinthor, and to all of Olaf's sons. They said they should take it hard if Bolli was to continue in the same neighborhood with them. But Olaf told them they would have to mind so long as he was up and about.

There was a ship laid up in Bjarnarhafn which belonged to Audun Festargarm (Bandog). He was present at the Thing and he was heard to say, "The chances are that these men will be no less outlawed in Norway than here if Kjartan's friends are still living." Then Osvif

answered him, "Halterdog, you are going to miss your guess. For my sons will be made much of by the best people everywhere, but you, Halterdog, will go to the devil before the summer is over." Audun set sail for Norway that summer and was wrecked in the Faroes, and every man of the ship's company was lost; so that it seemed to have turned out very much as Osvif had foretold. The Osvifsons sailed to Norway that summer, and none of them ever came back.

The outcome of the case was that Olaf was thought all the better of for having cut to the bone where it was well deserved, in the case of the Osvifsons, and for having spared Bolli for kinship's sake. Olaf duly thanked his friends for their backing. Bolli got the lands of Tunga which he had bought, with Olaf's consent. It is related that Olaf lived three years after Kjartan was killed. And after he had passed away his sons divided the property between them which he left. Haldor took over the home place at Hjardarholt. Thorgerd made her home with Haldor. She had a great hatred of Bolli, and felt that he had paid her a sore price, and unearned, for her care of him as her foster-child.

LII. Of the killing of Thorkel of Hafratindar.

A son was born to Gudrun and Bolli. This boy was given a name and called Thorleik. He quickly grew to be a fine boy, and a very active one. Haldor Olafson lived at Hjardarholt, as was written before. He was quite the foremost of the brothers. The spring after Kjartan's death Thorgerd Egilsdaughter put out to service with Thorkel of Hafratindar a certain boy who was a relative of hers. The boy herded sheep there that summer. To him as to many others Kjartan's death was a bitter grief. He was not allowed to talk about Kjartan while Thorkel was about, for Thorkel was in the habit of speaking ill of him and calling him a white-livered fellow and faint-hearted; and he used to mimic Kjartan, how he had behaved when he got his death-wound. The boy felt hurt with all this and went back to Hjardarholt and told about it to Haldor and Thorgerd and begged them to take him home. Thorgerd told him to keep his place through the winter. The boy said he could put up with it no longer, "and you would not ask me to if you only knew how hard it is for me." In the end Thorgerd yielded to his complaining and said she was willing to let him off from his service, so far as she was concerned. But Haldor said, "Better pay no attention to the boy; he is of no account." Then Thorgerd answered him, "The boy is of little account," said she, "but Thorkel has misbehaved at every turn in this affair. He knew that the Lauga-men

were lying in wait for Kjartan, and refused to warn him. And now he is making sport and jest of the fight and has been saying many unkind things. It is not likely that you brothers will ever make a move for revenge where the odds are against you if you are not going to pay off such a knave as Thorkel for his doings." Haldor had little to say to this, but he told Thorgerd to do as she liked about the boy's service. A few days later Haldor set out from home and several men with him. He went to Hafratindar and caught Thorkel at home. Thorkel was brought out-of-doors and put to death, and he met his death in no manly fashion. Haldor did no plundering, but went back home when this was done. Thorgerd spoke well of what was done and said that this reminder was at least better than nothing.

The summer passed over in peace, after a fashion, although relations were very much strained between Bolli and the Olafsons. The brothers were openly and ferociously hostile to Bolli, but he yielded at all points before his cousins, so far as he could without losing face; for he was quite stubbornly set on holding his place. Haldor kept many men about him and carried on in grand style, for there was no lack of means. Steindor Olafson was living at Dunustadir in the Laxárdal. His wife was Thurid Asgeirsdaughter, who had been the wife of Thorkel Kuggason. Their son was Steindor, who was nicknamed Groslappi.

LIII. Of Thorgerd's calling for vengeance.

The year following the death of Olaf Höskuldson Thorgerd Egilsdaughter sent word to her son Steindor, toward the end of winter, to come to her. When they met she explained to him that she wanted to go out west to see her kinswoman Aud. She told Haldor that he was to go along. There were five of them in company. So they went on until they were over against the farmstead of Tunga in Sælingsdal. Then Thorgerd turned her horse up toward the place and asked, "What is this farm called?" Haldor replied, "You are not asking because you don't already know it, Mother. This place is called In the Tongue." "Who lives here?" says she. He replied, "You know, Mother." Then said Thorgerd, with a sigh, "Indeed I know," said she, "that here lives Bolli, who killed your brother. And you boys are shockingly unlike your noble kindred; you who will not avenge such a brother as Kjartan was. Not so would your mother's father Egil have done. And it is an ill thing to be the mother of worthless sons. I am sure you are better fit to have been your father's daughters and so to have been married off decently. The old saw comes true, Haldor, that every kindred has its shortcomings; and this was Olaf's great failing that he missed it sorely in the getting of sons. I am saying all this to you, Haldor," said she, "because you come first among your brothers. Now let us turn back home. And this was what I brought you

out for; to remind you of this thing, in case you do not remember it anyway." Then said Haldor, "At least you will not be to blame, Mother, if we forget about it." He had little to say to it all, and yet his ill-will toward Bolli hardened and grew greater for it.

So now the winter is past and summer comes on, and then the time for the Thing is at hand. Haldor makes known his going to the Thing, and his brothers also. They rode down with a large following and set up their booths which had belonged to Olaf. The Thing passed over quietly and with nothing to tell of. At the Thing there were the Vididal folks, the sons of Gudmund Sölmundarson. Bardi Gudmundarson was then eighteen years old, large and stout. The Olafsons asked Bardi to come home with them, and they spent many words on it. Hall Gudmundarson, too, was in this country at the time. Bardi was glad to accept, for these kinsmen were very close friends. So Bardi rode out west with the Olafsons from the Thing to Hjardarholt. And Bardi spent the rest of the summer there.

LIV. Of the conspiracy for the killing of Bolli.

Now presently Haldor has a talk with Bardi privately and tells him that he and his brothers are planning to make a drive at Bolli, that they could no longer put up with their mother's reproaches. "And it is not to be denied, Cousin Bardi, that this had much to do with our asking you to come home with us, that we want your help and company in this business." Then answered Bardi, "It is something about which there will be a lot of nasty talk, this breaking faith with your kinsman. And then, on the other hand, Bolli strikes me as an unhandy fellow to deal with. He keeps a number of men about him, and he is himself a hard customer. Also there will be no lack of shrewd management where Gudrun and Osvif are concerned. Take it all together it looks like a very tough job to me." Then Haldor said, "There is no need of magnifying the difficulties of this thing. Also, I have not brought the matter up until it had already been decided that it would be carried through, and that we will try for vengeance on Bolli. And I am thinking, too, Cousin, that you are not going to cut out of going with us on this raid." Bardi answered him, "I know you think it quite unlikely for me to draw out of it; nor will I if I find that I am unable to stop you." "In that case you are doing the right thing," said Haldor, "as was to be expected." Bardi told him they would have to go about it pretty carefully. Haldor said he had found out

that Bolli had lately sent his men away, some of them up north to his ship in the Hrutafjord and others out along the beaches; "And I am told that Bolli is now at the outdairy in upper Sælingsdal and that there are no other men there with him than the farmhands who are at work getting in the hay. It seems to me that no other time will be more convenient for getting at Bolli than just now." So Haldor and Bardi settled this matter between them.

There was a man by the name of Thorstein the Black, who lived in Hundadal (Dogdale), one of the Breidafjord Dales, a wise and well-to-do man. He had long been a good friend of Olaf the Peacock. Thorstein had a sister named Solveig. She was married to a man by the name of Helgi Hardbeinson. Helgi was a big, stout man and much concerned in the foreign trade. At this time he was new-come from abroad and was staying with his brother-in-law Thorstein. Haldor sent word to Black Thorstein and his brother-in-law Helgi, and when they came to Hjardarholt Haldor told them what he was planning to do and asked them to join him. Thorstein spoke against this plot. "It is a great mistake for you and your cousins to go on killing one another. There are few men left of your breed now as good as Bolli." But for all of this kind that Thorstein had to say, nothing came of it. Haldor sent word to his uncle Lambi and when he came on Haldor told him what he had planned. Lambi spoke strongly for carrying it through. Thorgerd the housewife, too, was very much set on seeing the plan go through. She would never feel that Kjartan's death had been avenged until Bolli's life paid for it. So then they got ready to go.

In this raid there were the four sons of Olaf, with Bardi making a fifth. The sons of Olaf were these: Haldor and Steindor, Helgi and Höskuld; Bardi was the son of Gudmund; sixth Lambi; seventh Thorstein; eighth

Helgi, Thorstein's brother-in-law; ninth Án Bramblebelly. Thorgerd too set out with them. They rather spoke against her doing so; said this was not woman's work. But she said, Indeed she was going; "for I know you, my sons, better than anyone else, and that you will need a whetting." They told her she would have to do as she chose.

LV. Of the killing of Bolli; 1006.

They rode out on their way from Hjardarholt, the nine of them together. Thorgerd made a tenth. They followed the beach inward along the waterside as far as Ljárskog. This was in the early night. They made no stop until they came into Sælingsdal, about the time day was breaking. At that time there was a thick growth of woods in the valley. Bolli was there in the Sel, as Haldor had been told. The dairy houses were next the river, at the place which is now called Bollatoptir. A wooded ridge runs back of the dairy house, all the way down to Stakkagil. Between this wooded slope and the hillside is a broad meadow called the Barm. There Bolli's farmhands were at work. Haldor and those with him rode in by way of Oxnagrof, across the Rána uplands, and so crossed over above the Hamar meadow, which lies next the dairy houses. They dismounted and were expecting to wait there until the men had left the house and were gone to work.

Bolli's shepherd was out early that morning to see to the cattle up the hillside. He caught sight of the men in the thicket and of their horses, which were tied. He suspected that these would probably not be peaceable folk who were moving about so secretly. He started right back for the Sel, by the short way, to tell Bolli of the men's being there. Haldor was quick-sighted, and he caught sight of the herdsman running down the hillside and making for the Sel. He told the others that

"there is Bolli's shepherd, and he will have seen us here. We will have to head him off and not let him bring word to the Sel." They did as he told them. Án Bramblebelly outran the others and caught up with the boy. He picked him up and threw him on the ground. He struck the ground in such a way that the boy's back was broken.

After this they rode on to the dairy houses. There were two cabins; a sleeping-cabin and a store room. Bolli had been out early that morning to set the day's work going and had lain down to sleep after the workmen were gone. The two were alone in the cabin, Bolli and Gudrun. They woke up at the noise when the men dismounted. And then they heard them arguing about who was to go first into the cabin to meet Bolli. Bolli knew Haldor by his voice, as well as some of the others. Bolli told Gudrun to get out of the cabin and out of the way, and that the meeting was sure to be such as would be no comfort to her. But Gudrun replied that she believed nothing would take place which she could not afford to see, and that she would not get in Bolli's way even if she did stay by him. But Bolli said she would have to do as he told her, and Gudrun went out of the cabin. She went down the bank to the brook that ran by the place and started washing her linen. So Bolli was left alone in the cabin. He took his weapons, put a helmet on his head, covered himself with a shield, and carried Fotbit in his hand. He had no mail-coat.

Haldor and his men were debating how to go about it, for no one wanted to go into the cabin. At last Án Bramblebelly spoke up, "There are those men here with us who are nearer kin to Kjartan than I, but there is no one who has a better reason to remember what took place at the time when Kjartan lost his life than I. It stuck in my mind that time when I was carried to Tunga, barely not quite dead, and Kjartan killed, that I would be

glad to do Bolli a mischief if I ever got a chance. And I will go in first." Then spoke Thorstein the Black, "That is spoken like a man. But we had better not drive ahead without knowing what we are about. Better go to work carefully. Bolli will not be standing still when we get to him. Even though he is single-handed you will have to look for a stiff fight. Bolli is a stout fellow and a master of fence, and he carries a sword that is a fearsome weapon." Then Án went in with a rush into the cabin. He carried his shield over his head, with the narrow end forward. Bolli struck down at him with Fotbit and sheared off the tail end of the shield, and split Án's skull down through the neck. He dropped dead on the spot, as was to be expected. Lambi went next. He was carrying a shield and had his drawn sword in his hand. At that moment Bolli was pulling Fotbit out of the wound and his shield was shoved to one side. Then Lambi cut Bolli across the thigh, and it made a sore wound. In return Bolli struck Lambi's shoulder so that the sword ran all the way down his flank. It put him out of action at once, and he never had full use of his arm afterward, as long as he lived. Just then Helgi Hardbeinson drove in. He carried a spear the head of which was an ell long and the shaft of which was wound with iron. When Bolli saw all this he threw away the sword and took his shield between his two hands and pushed forward so as to meet Helgi in the doorway. Helgi drove at Bolli with the spear, through the shield and through Bolli himself. Bolli leaned up against the cabin-wall.

The rest of them now crowded into the cabin, Haldor and his brothers. Thorgerd too went into the cabin. Then Bolli spoke, "Now is the time for you brothers to come to closer quarters than before," and added that the defense was nearly done. Thorgerd spoke up in answer, and told them not to spare making thorough work of it with Bolli; told them to pass between head and body of

him. Bolli was then still standing up against the cabin wall and holding his kirtle up against him to keep the entrails from running out. Steindor Olafson then jumped at Bolli and struck him with an axe across the neck close down by the shoulders, and the head came clean off. Thorgerd called a blessing on the work of his hands, and added that Gudrun would now have something to do about Bolli's ruddy head for a while.

After this they went out of the cabin. Gudrun then came up from the brook and spoke to Haldor and his folks, and asked what there was to tell of their doings with Bolli. They told her what had taken place. Gudrun was dressed in a close-fitting smock with a woven bodice, and was wearing a wide turban on her head. She had tied about her a broad linen sash with blue stripes and a fringe at the ends. Helgi Hardbeinson stepped up to Gudrun and took up the sash end and wiped the blood off his spear with it, the same with which he had thrust Bolli through the body. Gudrun looked him in the face and smiled. Then said Haldor, "That was a mean and nasty thing to do." Helgi told him not to grieve about it, "I am thinking that there is that under this sash-end which will be the death of me." After this they caught up their horses and rode away. Gudrun went along and talked to them a while. Then presently she turned back.

LVI. Gudrun shifts to Helgafell; Bolli Bollason is born; 1006.

THE talk ran among the men with Haldor that Gudrun made little of the killing of Bolli, seeing that she came out with them on the way and kept talking to them all the while as if they had done nothing to displease her. Haldor answered them, "That is not what I believe, that Gudrun makes little of Bolli's death. I believe that reason for her seeing us off and talking to us was rather to find out just what men had been concerned in this business. And it is quite true too that Gudrun is far and away a most gifted and redoubtable woman. And it is no more than might be expected that Gudrun should take the loss of Bolli to heart, for when all is told the death of such a man as Bolli is a heavy loss, even though we who were his kinsmen had not the fortune to be on good terms with him." So they ride on their way home to Hjardarholt. These tidings ran swiftly far and wide and were made much of, and Bolli's death was felt to be a great loss.

Gudrun at once sent men to tell Snorri Godi; for both Osvif and she depended much on Snorri in all things. Snorri moved quickly in answer to Gudrun's message and came on to Tunga with sixty men. His coming was very welcome to Gudrun. He offered his services to look for a peaceable settlement; but Gudrun was not inclined to do so, to make terms on Thorleik's behalf and accept any composition for Bolli's death. "To

my mind, Snorri, you will be doing me the greatest service," said Gudrun, "if you will trade places with me, so that I will no longer be living next door to the Hjardarholt folks." Snorri was at this time having a serious quarrel with the folks at Eyr. He said he would do so for friendship's sake with Gudrun; "and yet, Gudrun, you will have to go on living at Tunga for another year." Snorri then got ready to leave, and Gudrun gave him honorable gifts on his leaving. So Snorri rode back home, and there might be said to be peace for the rest of the year.

The winter following the slaying of Bolli, Gudrun gave birth to a child. It was a boy. He was named Bolli. He quickly grew to be a large and fine boy. Gudrun was very fond of him. And when that winter passed and spring came on, then the trade went through which they had arranged, by which Snorri and Gudrun exchanged their lands. Snorri moved in at Tunga, and there he lived the rest of his life. Gudrun moved out to Helgafell, and Osvif with her, and there they set up a grand establishment. There Gudrun's two sons, Thorleik and Bolli grew up. Thorleik was three years old at the time his father Bolli was killed.

LVII. Of Thorgils Hölluson and of Thorkel Eyolfson.

THERE was a certain man by the name of Thorgils, known as Hölluson (the son of Halla). He was known by his mother's name because she outlived his father; his father's name had been Snorri and he was a son of Alf of the Dales. Halla, Thorgils's mother, was a daughter of Gest Oddleifson. Thorgils was living in Hördadal, on a farmstead called Tunga. Thorgils was a large man, handsome and showy and full of swagger. He had not a reputation for fair dealing. Much of the time Snorri and he would have little to do with each other. Snorri thought him meddlesome and blustering. Thorgils found many occasions for getting out into the farther countryside, and he often came to Helgafell and offered to help Gudrun manage her affairs. She took it all kindly and paid little attention to it all. Thorgils invited her son Thorleik home with him, and Thorleik stayed at Tunga for a long time and was taught Law by Thorgils, for he was learned in the Law.

At this time Thorkel Eyolfson was in the overseas trade. He was a well-known man and of good birth, and he was a great friend of Snorri Godi. He commonly stayed with his kinsman Thorstein Kuggason whenever he was in this country. And at one time when Thorkel Eyolfson was in Iceland and had a ship of his laid up at the Vadil on the beach of Bardastrand it so happened that a son of Eid of the Ridge was killed, in

the Borgarfjord country, by the sons of Helga of Kropp. The one who had killed him was named Grim, and his brother was Njáll. Njáll was drowned in the Hvitá (White River) shortly after, and Grim was made an outlaw, in the first degree, on account of the manslaughter; and he hid out in the hills and moors while he was under outlawry. He was a big man and a stout one. Eid was getting quite old at the time these things occurred. For this reason this thing was not followed up.

There was a lot of talk about Thorkel Eyolfson for his not having pushed this thing to a reckoning. The next following spring, when Thorkel had got his ship ready to sail, he set out for the South across Breidafjord, got him a horse and rode off by himself, and made no stop until he got to Ás (the Ridge) to his kinsman Eid. Eid welcomed him very cordially. Thorkel told him what his errand was, that he was going to look for his outlaw Grim; and he asked Eid if he could tell him anything about where his hiding-place might be. Eid answered him, "I don't like all this. It strikes me that you are taking large chances in this venture; and you will have to do with a hell-bent ugly customer in this man Grim. If you must go, you had best go with many men, so that you will have it all your own way." "It seems rather cowardly to me," said Thorkel, "to gather a force to go after one man. But what I would like is that you will let me borrow your sword Sköfnung; and I believe that I shall then be able to take care of one vagabond single-handed, even if he is an able-bodied fellow." "You will have to suit yourself," said Eid, "but I will not be surprised if you live to regret your reckless doings some day. But inasmuch as you are doing this thing for my sake, therefore I will not refuse what you ask of me. I believe Sköfnung will be in good hands while you carry him. But now, this is the nature of the Sword, that the sun must not be allowed to shine on his hilts, and he must not

be drawn while women are by; and if any man is wounded with this sword, then such wound can not be healed unless it is rubbed with the healing-stone that belongs to him." Thorkel said he would take good care of all this, and so he came by the sword. Eid told him that he believed Grim had his lair up north in the waste country of the Tvidægra, (Two-Day Pass), about the Fishwaters. So then Thorkel rode away up country northward into the moors, in the direction which Eid had pointed out to him. And after he had been riding a long way over the moors he caught sight of a large cabin by a stretch of water and made his way to it.

LVIII. Of Thorkel and Grim.

Now Thorkel comes up to the cabin and then he sees a man sitting down by the water's edge and pulling fish out of the outlet of a brook. The man was wearing a fur hood. Thorkel got down and tied his horse by the cabin wall and went on down to the water where the man was sitting. Grim saw the man's shadow as it fell on the water and started up swiftly. By this time Thorkel has got quite close up to him, so much so that he lunged with the sword and struck his forearm above the wrist. It was not much of a wound. Grim straightway closed with Thorkel and they fell to wrestling, and then the odds in strength at once told against him and Thorkel went down with Grim on top of him. Then Grim asked who this man was. Thorkel told him to never mind. Grim said, "Now this thing has turned out otherwise than you had intended, for your life is in my hands now." Thorkel told him he was not going to beg for mercy, "for my luck has gone against me." But Grim said that his own misfortunes were quite sufficient already, even if he got clear of this one. "There will be something else in store for you than to die in a fight with me. I will give you your life, and you can do as you like about it." So they both of them got up and went back to the cabin. Thorkel saw that Grim was failing for loss of blood, and he then got out the Sköfnung stone and rubbed the cut with it and bound up Grim's arm, and at once it took all the smart and swelling out of the wound. They stayed there overnight. In the morning Thorkel

got ready to leave and asked if Grim would go with him. He said he surely would. Thorkel thereupon turned into the west, and did not go back to Eid. He made no stay until he came to Tunga in Sælingsdal.

Snorri Godi made him welcome very kindly. Thorkel told him that his affair had turned out badly. But Snorri said it was quite all right. "It strikes me that good luck will go with Grim. And I wish," said he, "that you will deal handsomely with him. Also, my advice to you would be," said Snorri, "to quit your trading and settle down and get married and make a chieftain of yourself, such as your birth fits you for." Thorkel replied, "Often has your advice profited me," and went on to ask if he had taken thought as to what woman he ought to marry. Snorri answered him, "You are to ask that woman who is the best match there is to be had, and that will be Gudrun Osvifsdaughter." Thorkel said it was all quite true, that the match was an honorable one, "and yet I have grave doubts about the headstrong temper of her, and her large ambitions. And then she will want to take revenge for her husband Bolli. And at that point Thorgils Hölluson appears to be making plans with her, and it is quite likely that he would not take it kindly. Still, Gudrun is much to my liking." Snorri told him, "I will undertake that Thorgils shall not molest you. And it also seems very likely to me that something will have been done about the vengeance of Bolli before the year is out." Thorkel replied, "It may be that these are not empty words that you are telling me now; but as for vengeance to be taken for Bolli I see no more of a prospect now than for some time past; unless some of the big men should take it in hand." Snorri went on to say, "I should like to have you go abroad again, once more, this summer. We will then see what will happen." Thorkel said it should be done, and they parted on this understanding.

Thorkel then went off to the west across Breidafjord and so on to his ship. He carried Grim with him on the voyage. They had good weather that summer and reached Norway somewhat to the south. Thorkel then told Grim, "You are aware how the case stands between us, and what has brought about this acquaintance of ours. There is no call to talk about it. I would gladly have it end in less difficulties than seemed likely once upon a time. You have shown that you are a good and trusty man, and for that cause I am going to take leave of you just as if I had never borne you ill-will. I will find you in trade-goods to such an amount that you will be able to enter the gild of substantial merchants. Yet, do not settle down in this country; for there are many kinsmen of Eid's among the traders, and they bear a heavy grudge against you." Grim thanked him for what he was saying and said he could have expected nothing so generous as what he offered. On their parting he provided Grim with a good stock of goods. Many were heard to say that this was done like a great man. Grim went on eastward into Vik and settled there. He was accounted a good and substantial man. And here ends what is to be said of Grim. Thorkel spent the winter in Norway and was looked on as a man of great account. He was a man of great wealth and a good deal of a driver.

Now it is time to leave all this to one side for a while and take up the story out on Iceland and hear what has been taking place there while Thorkel has been away.

LIX. Of the scheming of Snorri and Gudrun.

GUDRUN OSVIFSDAUGHTER went on a visit into the Dale country that summer, in the Twimonth. She rode in to Thykkvaskog. At that time Thorleik was in Thykkvaskog off and on, and with the two Armodsons, Haldor and Örnolf, and sometimes he was with Thorgils at Tunga. That same night Gudrun sent a man to Snorri Godi to say that she wished to see him next day. Snorri set out at once and rode on his way with one other man till he reached the Haukadalsá.

There is a cliff standing on the north side of the river which is called Höfdi; it is on land belonging to Lækjarskog. It was here that Gudrun had sent word that Snorri was to meet her, and they reached the place at much the same time. There was also one person in company with Gudrun. This was Bolli Bollason. He was then twelve years old.[1] But he was a man both in body and mind; so much so that there were many men who never reached a fuller growth and vigor when full-grown. And he was then carrying Fotbit.

Snorri and Gudrun then took up their talk, while Bolli and Snorri's man sat down on the cliff and watched the

[1] This is poetic licence, of course. The plot against Helgi Hardbeinson is known to have taken effect no later than 1007; when Bolli Bollason was not more than two or three years old. None of Bolli's sons had any share in the raid; Bolli Bollason being then under two years old.

coming and going of people about the neighborhood. And when Snorri and Gudrun had exchanged the commonplace news of the day, then Snorri asked about her business; what new thing had come up just then, that she had sent for him in such a hurry. Gudrun told him, "It is true, this thing is brand-new to me, that I am going to call to mind, and yet it all happened twelve years ago. For it is about vengeance for Bolli that I have something to say. And this will not come on you unawares, for I have reminded you of it from time to time. I will also call to mind that you have promised to help me about it if I would wait patiently. But by this time I am afraid the chance of your giving it your attention is already past. Now I have waited as long as I have the heart to, and I have come to you to advise me where the vengeance is to strike." Snorri asked her whom she most had in mind. Gudrun replied, "It is my wish that the Olafsons should not all get off unhurt." Snorri said that he should have to bar out any attack on any of those men who were of first consequence in the countryside, "and who are at the same time near kin to men who will promptly bring vengeance in return. And it is high time that these family feuds should come to an end." Then Gudrun said, "In that case we will go after Lambi and kill him. That will dispose of the most mischievous one of them." Snorri asked in reply, "Have you a case against Lambi, in case he were killed? And it does not seem to me that that would be vengeance for Bolli. And no such odds will be given Bolli as there should be if the loss of the two men come to be offset against each other in settlement of the case." Gudrun told him, "It may be that we shall never get even with these Laxdalers; but someone will now have to pay up, whatever dale he lives in. So now we will pay our attentions to Black Thorstein, for no man has played a more shameful part in all this case than he." Snorri then

said, "You have just so much of a case against Thorstein as against the other men who took part in the attack on Bolli without actually doing him violence. But you are leaving those men on one side who seem to me to be better worth while for your vengeance and who have the name of having killed Bolli. I am thinking of Helgi Hardbeinson." Gudrun told him, "That is true. But I can not make up my mind to leave all these men quite out of it against whom I have been nursing my hate all this time." Snorri answered, "I can tell you what to do about that. Lambi and Thorstein will have to go with your sons on this errand. That will be about the right price for them to pay. And if they will not; then I will have nothing to say for them, but will let you do them any kind of mischief you like." Then Gudrun asked, "How are we to go about getting these men to come into the raid, these that you have spoken of?" "That will be for those to take care of who are to have the management of the raid." Gudrun told him, "In all this we will have to fall back on your guidance; who is to take charge and lead the raid." Then Snorri smiled and told her, "You have already chosen a man for that work." Gudrun replied, "You are talking about Thorgils?" Snorri said that such was the case. Gudrun then told him, "I have had some talk with Thorgils about this thing, and it seems to be no use. He stands out for one condition, which I will not consider. Thorgils did not refuse to avenge Bolli if he were allowed to marry me. That is out of the question, and so I am not going to ask him to take part in this adventure." Snorri replied, "Let me give you some advice about this, because I do not begrudge Thorgils this job. To be sure, you will promise to marry him; but you will do so with the underhand proviso that you will marry no man in this country except Thorgils. And all that you will live up to; inasmuch as Thorkel Eyolfson is not in

this country just now, and I have been counting on this marriage for him." Gudrun replied, "He is likely to see that dodge." But Snorri said, "Indeed he will not see it. Thorgils has proved himself to be more active than wise. Make this bargain with him in the presence of very few witnesses. Call in his foster-brother Haldor, but not Örnolf; because he has more sense. And then let me know if it will not do."

With this the two finished their talk and took leave of each other. Snorri rode back home and Gudrun to Thykkvaskog. Next morning Gudrun rode away from Thykkvaskog and her sons with her, and when they were riding on their way out along the beach at Skogar they saw a company of men come riding after them. These men rode hard and caught up quickly. And there was Thorgils Hölluson. They met each other as good friends should, and so they rode on together through the rest of the day out to Helgafell.

LX. Gudrun and Thorgils make their plans.

In a few days after Gudrun had got back home she took her sons with her into her potherb garden. And when they got there they saw there spread out on the grass certain linen garments, a shirt and drawers. They were all bloody. Then Gudrun spoke to them, "These same clothes that you see before you call on the two of you to avenge your father. Now I will not spend many words on it, for there is not much chance that you will be led by words if such tokens and reminders as these do not move you." The two brothers were much upset with this that Gudrun was saying to them, but they answered her by saying that they had been pretty young to follow up the feud, and without help or guidance; and that they could make no plans either for themselves or for anyone else. "But we know quite well what we have lost." Gudrun said they seemed to have more of a mind for horse-fights and games. And with this they went off. The night after this the two brothers were unable to sleep. Thorgils noticed it, and asked what was the matter with them. They told him all about the talk which they had had with their mother, and that they were not going to put up with their own grief and their mother's complaints any longer. "We are going to look for vengeance," said Bolli, "and my brother and I are now old enough so that folks will be finding fault with us if we do not lift a hand."

Next day Thorgils and Gudrun talked it over and Gudrun then spoke up and said, "It runs in my mind, Thorgils, that my two sons are no longer content with this sitting still and doing nothing about vengeance for their father. But this is what most has stood in the way of it up to this time, that Thorleik and Bolli have so far seemed too young to take a man's part in such an affair; although there has been plenty of reason to take thought of this thing before now." Thorgils answered her, "You need not talk about all this to me at all, for the reason that you have flatly refused to go with me. But I am still of the same mind as before, whenever we have spoken of this matter. If I can get you to marry me, then I will make no bones about bumping off one or both of those who had most to do with the killing of Bolli." Gudrun then told him, "I understand that Thorleik is sure there is no one else will do as well for a leader, if anything is to be done that will call for something in the way of hard knocks. And I need not cover up the fact that the two boys are planning to go after Helgi Hardbeinson, the berserk who is now sitting at home on his farm in Skorradal and has no misgivings." Thorgils told her, "Never do I care whether his name is Helgi or anything else. Nor do I count Helgi, or anyone else, more than a match for me. About this whole matter all is said, so far as I am concerned, if you will pledge yourself before witnesses to marry me in case I put this vengeance through with the help of your sons." Gudrun said that she would not fail to live up to anything which she might promise, even if it were done in the presence of very few witnesses, and went on to say that it should be done as he wished.

Gudrun then sent out to call in his foster-brother Haldor and her two sons. Thorgils asked to have Örnolf too called in. But Gudrun said there was no need of it. "I have less confidence in Örnolf's good faith in any-

thing that concerns me than you do." Thorgils told her to have it her own way. So now the two brothers came in and joined Gudrun and Thorgils, and Haldor was with them and heard what was said. Gudrun then explained to them that "Thorgils has pledged himself to act as leader in a raid on Helgi Hardbeinson in company with my sons to avenge Bolli. Thorgils has, further, made it a condition of his taking part in the raid, that he is to get me in marriage. Now therefore I declare in your presence as witnesses that I hereby promise Thorgils to marry no other man in all this country than himself alone. And I am not going to marry in any other country." Now to Thorgils it seemed that this should be sufficiently binding, and he did not see through this thing. And so the matter was finished. And so now it is settled for good and all that Thorgils is to undertake the raid. He set out from Helgafell, and Gudrun's sons with him. They rode away into the Dale country, and first home to Tunga.

LXI. Of Black Thorstein and Lambi Thorbjarnarson.

The next following Sunday was Leid,[1] and Thorgils went there with his crowd. Snorri Godi was not at the Leid. There were many people there. Some time during the day Thorgils took Thorstein the Black aside and spoke to him. "It happens, as you are aware, that you took part in the raid with the Olafsons at the time Bolli was killed; and your account with his sons is still unsettled. Now, although it is long since these events took place, yet I take it they are not forgotten by those who took part in that raid. Now the two brothers consider that it would be quite improper for them to make a move against the Olafsons, for kinship's sake. So now it is the intention of the two brothers to turn on Helgi Hardbeinson for revenge, for it was he gave Bolli the death-wound. We are asking you, Thorstein, to go on this raid with the brothers, and so purchase peace and security for yourself." Thorstein answered, "This is not a decent thing for me to do, to help hatch a plot against Helgi, who is my brother-in-law. I will much rather make a money payment for my own security, to such an amount as will be quite fair and reasonable." Thorgils said, "I take it, the two brothers have no mind to make a profit out of this thing. You need not harbor any doubts about it, Thorstein; it is for you to choose be-

[1] An assize for the publication of ordinances and decisions adopted at the Althing.

tween two things, either to bear a hand in this raid, or to put up with hard usage just so soon as they can get at you. Indeed I too would like you to take this way out, even though there is this difficulty about your connection with Helgi. It will have to be each for himself when it comes to such a pinch." And Thorstein asked, "Will others be offered the same choice, of those who have accounts outstanding with Bolli's sons?" And Thorgils said, "Lambi will have the same choice to make." Thorstein then said it would look somewhat better to him if he were not to be the only one who had to do with it.

After this Thorgils called Lambi to him and asked Thorstein to stay by and hear what they had to say. And he spoke to Lambi and said, "What I wish to talk to you about, Lambi, is much the same as I have already brought up to Thorstein. What satisfaction are you willing to offer the sons of Bolli for those charges which they hold against you? We have been credibly informed that you had a hand in wounding Bolli, and what makes you all the more guilty is that you gravely abetted the killing of Bolli by your urgent advice. At the same time you had more provocation than anyone else, except the Olafsons." Lambi asked what terms were offered. Thorgils said the same choice would be open to him as to Thorstein, to join with the two brothers. Lambi said, "That strikes me as a mean price to pay for peace, and a villainous bargain. I don't like this business." Then Thorstein spoke up, "It is not such a simple thing, Lambi, to break away from this undertaking out of hand. There are great men concerned in all this, and men who stand high and who feel that they have long had the worse of it. As to Bolli's sons I am told that they promise to be stout fellows and full of spunk, and they have a good deal of provocation. We can not expect to get off with nothing to pay after having done so great a deed. And

folks are likely to put most of the blame for this thing on me, because of my connection with Helgi. And yet, I take it, it comes home to nearly everyone that life is cheap at any price, and that the first trouble to get out of is that which first comes on you." Lambi told him, "It is quite plain what you want to do, Thorstein. And I think you had better have the say in this matter if it looks so very plain to you. We have long been partners in misery. But I will have to make it a condition, if I am to come in on this, that my kinsmen the Olafsons are to be left undisturbed and in peace if vengeance is worked out on Helgi." Thorgils agreed to this in behalf of the two brothers.

So now it was agreed that Thorstein and Lambi were to join forces with Thorgils on this raid. They agreed together that they were to come, early on the Tuesday following, to Tunga in Hördadal. With that they parted. Thorgils rode home to Tunga that evening. So the time came round which they had agreed on, when they were to meet Thorgils, those who were engaged with him for the raid. Tuesday morning, before sunrise, Thorstein and Lambi came to Tunga. And Thorgils made them welcome.

LXII. Thorgils and his men set out.

THORGILS now made ready, and they rode away up country by way of Hördadal, ten of them. There was Thorgils Hölluson, leader of the band; there were the sons of Bolli, Bolli and Thorleik, and with them was their brother Thord Tomcat, as the fourth man; fifth Thorstein the Black; sixth Lambi, seventh and eighth Haldor and Örnolf; ninth Sveinn and tenth Hunbogi, these were the sons of Alf of the Dales. These were all able-bodied fighting men. They took their way up the valley to the pass of Sopandaskard and across Langavatzdal and so right across the Borgarfjord country. They rode over the Nordá river at the Eyarvad ford and over the Hvitá at Bakkavad, a little way above the farmstead of that name. They then rode on along the Reykjardal, and so over the divide into Skorradal and so up through the woods until they were near the farm at Vatzhorn. Here they dismounted. It was then well along in the evening.

The farm at Vatzhorn lies a little way back from the water, south of the river. Thorgils then told his men that they would stop there overnight, "and I will go scouting to the farmyard and find out if Helgi is at home. I am told that Helgi has few men with him for the most part, but that he is quite uncommonly careful of himself and that he sleeps in a stout-built closet-bed." Thorgils's companions told him it was for him to see about it. Thorgils then made a change of clothing. He

put off his blue cloak and put on over all a long gray raincoat of coarse stuff. He went on to the farmhouse, and when he got near the farmyard fence he caught sight of a man coming toward him; and when they met, Thorgils said, "You will perhaps think I am asking a foolish question, my friend, when I want to know what place I have come to. What is the name of this place? And who lives here?" The man answered him, "You must be awfully stupid and know very little if you have never heard of Helgi Hardbeinson, the hard-driver and big chief." Thorgils then asked how it was, if Helgi would be likely to take in men who came to him "unknown and much in need of help." He answered, "It is easy to tell you the truth about that, for Helgi is quite free-handed both about taking in such men and about any other work of force and manhood." "Is Helgi at home now?" asked Thorgils. "I was going to ask him to take me in." The other asked what was the trouble with him. Thorgils answered, "I was outlawed this summer at the Thing. I am now looking for a place to stay with some man who is ready and able to hold his own. And on my part I will follow and serve him for it. And now will you come home with me to the house to see Helgi?" "I am quite ready to take you to the house," said he, "and you shall be welcome to stay overnight. But you will not find Helgi, because he is not at home." Thorgils then asked where he was. The man answered, "Helgi is at an out-dairy of his, at the place called the Sarp (Rookery)." Thorgils asked where that was, and what other folks were with him. He replied that his son Hardbein was with him, and two other men who were outlaws and whom he had taken in. Thorgils asked him to show him the way to the dairy right away, "for I want to find Helgi as soon as I can get to him and get my errand done." The man did so and told him the way, and after that they parted.

Thorgils turned back into the woods to his men and told them what he had found out about Helgi and his doings. "We will stay here overnight and not go on to the dairy until morning." They did as he told them. The next morning they did not set out for the dairy till broad daylight. Thorgils with his men then rode on up through the woods till they were near the dairy cabin. Then Thorgils told them to get off their horses and eat breakfast, and so they did. They stopped there a while.

LXIII. The shepherd's description of Thorgils's band.

Now is to be told of what was doing at the Sel. Helgi was there and certain men with him, as has already been told. Helgi talked with his herdsman that morning and told him to take a turn through the woods in the neighborhood of the Sel and see what people, if any, were about, and anything else that was going on; "I have had bad dreams overnight." The young man did as Helgi told him. He was gone some little time and when he got back Helgi asked him what he had found out. He answered, "I have seen something that I think is worth telling about." Helgi asked what it was. He said he had seen some men, and not a few of them either, "and I believe they are men from outside." Helgi asked, "Where was it you saw them? and what were they doing? and did you notice how they were dressed or what they looked like?" He answered, "I was not so badly scared as not to notice things like that, because I knew that you would be asking about it." He went on to say that they were not far from the Sel and were eating their breakfast. Helgi asked if they were sitting together in a circle or each by himself in a row. He said they were sitting in a ring in their saddles.

Then Helgi said, "Now tell me about their looks. I want to see if I can tell who these folks are from their looks." The young man told him, "There was one man in a bright-painted saddle who wore a blue cloak. He

was big and strong looking, bald in front; and his teeth showed." "I know that one well enough from what you have told me," said Helgi. "The man you have seen is Thorgils Hölluson, out of Hördadal out west. But what does that bully want of us?" The boy spoke again, "Next him sat a man in saddle done with paint and gilding. He was wearing a coat of red scarlet and a gold ring on one arm and had a gold band tied around his head. That man had yellow hair, and it came down to his shoulders in long curls. He was light colored and had a hooked nose that turned a bit up at the end; with good eyes, blue-eyed and quick; with a broad forehead and full face; his hair was bobbed over the eyebrows, and he had broad shoulders and a big chest; he had beautiful hands and stout wrists; all his movements were easy and well-mannered, and indeed I can only say that I have never seen a finer looking man, all and all. And he was a young man, too, so that there was no hair on his face; and he looked as if he might be full of grief." Then said Helgi, "You have been looking this man over pretty carefully. And this man is likely to be a great man yet. But I have never seen this man. Still I have a guess as to who it is. I am of opinion that it will have been Bolli Bollason. I have been told that he is a promising young man." "Next him sat a man in a saddle worked in enamel. He wore a yellowish-green coat, and had a big gold ring on his wrist. This man was very good looking and seemed to be quite young; brown haired and with a very good head of hair, and in every way he was a gentleman." Helgi answered, "I think I know who this man is that you are telling about. It is likely to have been Thorleik Bollason. You are a smart fellow and quick to notice things." "Next there sat a young man. He wore a blue coat and black breeches, with the breeches belted on the outside. This man had a straight smooth face, with light hair, and rather good

looking; slight build and good manners." Helgi answered, "This one I know and have seen some time, and it will have been when he was very young. It will have been Thord Thordarson, that Snorri Godi adopted. They come with a very choice lot of gentlefolk, these Westfjordings. And what more is there?" "Next there was a man sitting in a Scottish saddle, with a gray beard and black eyebrows, black close-curled hair, rather ugly looking, but he looked like a fighting man. He wore a gray storm-cloak." Helgi answered, "I can easily tell who that one is. That is Lambi Thorbjarnarson from Laxárdal. But I do not see what he is doing along with the two brothers." The boy went on, "Next was a man in a stock-saddle, with a hooded blue frieze cape over all, and with a silver ring on one arm. He had the look of a farmer and pretty well along in years; with dark brown hair and very curly, and with a scar across his face." "Now the tale is turning bad very fast," said Helgi. "That was my brother-in-law Black Thorstein, that you have seen. And it strikes me as a real wonder that he should have any part in this raid. And I would not be making him such a visit. But what more is there?" He answered, "Then there were two men together. They were alike in looks and would be about middle age, stout and hard looking, red-haired and freckle-faced, and still rather good-looking." Helgi told him, "I see quite plainly who these two are. They are the Armodsons, Thorgils's foster-brothers, Haldor and Örnolf. You are a clever fellow. And now, have you told about all the men that you saw?" He answered, "I have a little more to tell. Next them there sat a man who faced out of the circle. He was in a coat of plate mail and had a steel cap on his head, and the rim of it was a hand's breadth wide. He carried a bright polished axe over his shoulder, with an edge about an ell long. This man was black-eyed and looked very much like a pirate."

Helgi answered, "This man I can easily tell from what you say. It will have been Hunbogi the Strong, son of Alf of the Dales. And I would like to know what they are after. They have a picked lot of men on this raid." The boy spoke again, "There was one more man who sat next to this stout fellow. This one had black-brown hair, full-faced and ruddy and with heavy eyebrows; rather over middle height." Helgi then said, "You need not tell me any more. That was Sveinn, son of Alf of the Dales, Hunbogi's brother. And now we had better not be caught unawares by these men; for I am inclined to think that they will want to get at me before they quit the neighborhood, and there are some in that crowd who would have thought it quite all right even if they had got at me before this. Now we will have the women who are here about the dairy get into men's clothes and take the horses that are here and ride off at top speed back home to the farm. May be these men who are hiding near by will not be able to tell if the riders are men or women. If they will only give us a little time we can call in a few men to help us, and in that case it is not at all certain which of us will stand the better chance." So the women rode off, four of them in all.

Now Thorgils mistrusted that news of them might have got through, and so he told them to get to horse and ride on as fast as they could go. So they did, but just as they were getting into their saddles there came a man riding up to them quite openly. He was an under-sized man, nimble and fussy, and he was riding a swift horse. This man spoke to Thorgils like an old acquaintance. Thorgils asked him his name and kin and where he came from. He said his name was Hrapp and that he was of Breidafjord kin by his mother's side, "and that is where I grew up, too. My name comes from Viga-Hrapp (Hrapp the Killer), and this goes with the name that

I am no easy man to deal with even if I am under-size. On my father's side I am from the South, and I have been staying there some years past. And it has turned out very handily, Thorgils, that I have come on you here, as I was on my way to see you anyway, even if it had not come so easy for me. But I have trouble on my hands. I have had a falling-out with my master. I had taken some hard usage from him, and it does not go with my name to put up with insults from any man, and I struck him. Yet I do not believe I hurt him much if any. But I did not stop there long to find out, because I considered that I would be safer so soon as I got on this horse, which I took from him." Hrapp had much to say and asked few questions, because they were by that time all ready to go on. Yet he found out very shortly that they were going after Helgi, and that pleased him, and he told them they need not look to see him hang back.

LXIV. Of the killing of Helgi Hardbeinson; 1006(?).

THORGILS and his men rode off at a great rate as soon as they were mounted, and so ran out of the woods. Then they saw four riders going away from the Sel, and they too were riding full speed. Some of the men with Thorgils wanted to ride after them with all speed. But Thorleik Bollason told them, "Let us first get to the Sel and find out who are there. I do not believe that is Helgi and his men. It looks to me as if they were nothing but women." Most of them took the other side. But Thorgils told them he would take Thorleik's word for it, for he knew that Thorleik was uncommonly sharp-sighted. So they went on to the Sel. Hrapp ran on ahead and brandished a little stick of a spear which he carried, and kept thrusting out with it and saying that now was the time to show what they were good for. Helgi and those with him did not see them until Thorgils and his men had surrounded the cabin. Helgi and his men then barred the door and took to their weapons. Hrapp drove right up to the cabin and asked if the old fox was at home. Helgi answered him, "You may just as well make up your mind that the one who lives here is a bit ugly and likely to bite you if you get too near his hole." And right then Helgi thrust his spear out of a loop-hole in the cabin wall and through Hrapp's body. He dropped dead off the spear to the ground. Thorgils told them to take care and run no

risks; "For we have all the force we need to take both the Sel and Helgi as the thing stands now, for I take it there are very few of them."

The cabin roof was laid on a single ridge-pole which rested on the gable walls in such a way that the ends of it stuck out, and the roof was thatched with a single layer of sods which had not yet taken root. Thorgils had his men take a hold of the ends of the ridgepole and pull on it until it either broke or let go of the rafters. He set others to guard the doors, in case they should try to get out. There were five of them in the cabin, counting Helgi; his son Hardbein was there, he was then twelve years old, together with the herdsboy; and there were two other men who had come to Helgi that summer and who were outlaws, the one named Thorgils and the other Eyolf. Black Thorstein was before the cabin door together with Sveinn, the son of Alf of the Dales, while the rest of them were pulling the roof off the cabin. They had divided their force for the work. At one end of the ridge-pole were Hunbogi the Strong and the Armodsons, while Thorgils and Lambi and Gudrun's sons took the other end. They heaved on the beam till it broke in two. And just then Hardbein thrust out with a halberd, where the door had been broken. The stroke hit Black Thorstein's steel cap, so that the edge cut into his forehead, and gave him a very ugly wound. And Thorstein said it was quite true that there were men inside. Right after this Helgi made a rush out of the door so swiftly that the nearest ones of those outside fell back. Thorgils was close in and he slashed at him with his sword and struck him on the shoulder. It made a deep cut. Helgi turned on him with a wood chopper's axe in his hands, and said, "Not yet is the old man afraid to face your weapons." And he let drive with the axe at Thorgils and struck his leg, and gave him a great wound. And when Bolli saw this he rushed in on Helgi,

with Fotbit, and ran him through with the sword. That was his death-wound. Helgi's two henchmen broke out of the cabin at the same time, as well as Hardbein. Thorleik Bollason met Eyolf, who was a powerful man. Thorleik gave him a sword-cut which struck the thigh just over the knee and took his foot off. He fell dead on the ground. Hunbogi the Strong met Thorgils with a rush and struck at him with his axe, and the blow took him across the back so as to cut him in two at the middle. Thord Tomcat was near where Hardbein ran out and was about to drive at him. Bolli ran in when he saw what was coming, and told him not to hurt Hardbein. "No one is going to disgrace himself here today. Hardbein is not to be hurt." Helgi had one other son, who was named Skorri and who was then growing up on the farm of England (Meadowland) in the southern Reykjardal.

LXV. Of the end of Thorgils Hölluson's courtship.

When these things were done Thorgils and his men rode away over the rise into Reykjardal and there made declaration of these manslaughters. Then they rode back into the West by the same road over which they had ridden east, and made no stay until they came into Hördadal. There they told the news of what had been done while they were gone. This raid of theirs got to be quite famous, and it was counted great work to have brought down such a fighting man as Helgi. Thorgils thanked the men who had been with him and so did also the Bollasons. So therewith the men parted company who had been with Thorgils on this raid.

Lambi rode off to the west into Laxárdal and went first of all to Hjardarholt and gave his kinsmen there a detailed account of all these things that had taken place in Skorradal. They blamed him for his part in it and made much of his misbehavior; told him that he had showed up as a descendant of Thorbjörn Screwhair rather than of Myrkjartan, King of the Irish. Lambi got very angry at what they were saying and told them they were forgetting their manners if they blamed him; "for the fact is that I have snatched you out of sudden death," said he. They had little more to say to one another then, and both sides were more at odds than ever. Lambi rode away home.

Thorgils Hölluson rode out to Helgafell and Gudrun's

sons went with him and also his foster-brothers Haldor and Örnolf. They came to Helgafell late at night, after everybody was in bed. Gudrun got up and called her people out to wait on them. She went into the living-room and greeted Thorgils and the rest of them and asked the news. Thorgils answered Gudrun's salutation. He had by that time put off his cloak, and his weapons as well, and was sitting up against the pillars of the dais. Thorgils was wearing a reddish-brown tunic with a broad silver belt about his middle. Gudrun sat down on the bench beside him. Then Thorgils chanted these verses:

Sóttum heim at Helga.
Hrafn létum ná svelgia.
Ruðum fagr rauðúls Eiki
þá er fylgðu Thorleiki.
þriá létum þar falla
þiodnýta gervalla
Hialms allkaena þolla.
Hefnt telium nú Bolla.[1]

Gudrun then asked in detail about what had taken place in the raid. Thorgils answered all her questions. Gudrun told them their work had been thoroughly well done and gave them her thanks for it. Then they were served with meat and drink, and when they had their fill they were shown to bed. They slept till morning.

On the following day Thorgils came to have a talk with Gudrun and said, "It has come about, as you are

[1] We went after Helgi in his home.
We let the ravens devour corpses.
Beautifully red did we warriors
Who followed Thorleik dye things red.
Three did we there lay low,
everyone of them good men,
most skilful fighting men.
Now do we count Bolli avenged.

aware, Gudrun, that I have now carried out the undertaking which you once required of me. And I think I can say, too, that I have done the work well. You will doubtless also remember what it is that you have promised me in return. I consider that I have now fulfilled the bargain." Then said Gudrun, "No such long time has passed since we talked it over that it is likely to have gone out of my mind. And I, for my part, mean punctually to live up to everything that I have promised you. Now, have you clearly in mind just what the agreement was between us?" Thorgils replied that she would be likely to have it in mind. Then Gudrun said, "I believe I promised you this; that I would marry no man in this country but yourself. Or do you take any exception to that?" Thorgils told her she remembered it right. "That is good," said Gudrun, "if the two of us remember this thing alike. And now I am not going to drag this matter along to greater lengths before you; that I believe it will not be my fate to become your wife. To my mind I would be living up to every word I have promised you if I were to marry Thorkel Eyolfson, inasmuch as he is not now in this country." Then Thorgils told her, and he grew very red, "I see plain enough where that chilly draught comes from. Cold comfort has come to me out of the schemes drawn from the same quarter before. I am sure this is the scheming of Snorri Godi." Thorgils got on his feet and broke off the talk, and he was then very angry. He went to his companions and told them he was leaving. Thorleik felt hurt at things having turned out in such a way as not to suit Thorgils, but Bolli fell in with his Mother's wishes in the matter. Gudrun talked of giving large gifts to Thorgils and making it up to him in that way. But Thorleik said that would be no use, "for Thorgils is too much of a man to let himself be put off with trifles in this matter." "In that case," said Gudrun, "he had best comfort him-

self with his own company at home." So with all this Thorgils rode out of Helgafell, and his foster-brothers with him. He got back home to Tunga, and was badly out of humor with his own lot.

LXVI. Gest and Osvif die.

That winter Osvif was taken sick and died. It seemed a great loss, for he had been a very wise man. Osvif was buried at Helgafell. Gudrun had by that time built a church at that place. During the same winter Gest Oddleifson too fell sick, and when the sickness bore down on him he called for his son Thord the Low and told him, "I have come to think that this illness will end our life together. It is my wish to be taken to Helgafell, for that place will be the foremost in these parts. Often have I seen a light shining from that direction." After this Gest expired.

The winter had been rather cold. The ice lay thick and unbroken and stretched far out on the waters of Breidafjord; so much so that no boats could run out of Bardastrand. Gest's body was laid out for two days and nights at Hagi. But during that night the wind came up so stiff as to drive all the ice off shore, but on the following day the weather was fine and calm. Thord got out a boat and put Gest's body aboard, and he ran out to the south across Breidafjord that day and came in to Helgafell by nightfall. There Thord was made welcome, and he stayed there overnight. Next morning Gest's body was buried, and Osvif and he came to rest in the same grave. So Gest's prophecy came true; that they came to be nearer neighbors than they had been when one of them was living on Bardastrand and the other at Tunga in Sælingsdal. Thord the Low went

home as soon as he was ready; but in the night next after there came up a wild storm. The ice then drove back in all along the shore. So that for a long time that winter no boats could pass. It seemed a notable marvel that the passage should have been opened for Gest's body, when the waters were quite impassable before and after.

LXVII. Of Thorgils Hölluson's taking off.

THERE was a man by the name of Thorarin who was living in Langadal. He was the holder of a *Goðorð*, but was not a rich man. His son's name was Audgisl. He was a promising young man, alert and confident. Thorgils Hölluson took the Godord office away from them by force. Audgisl went to Snorri Godi and told him of this outrage and asked him to help them out. Snorri gave a smooth answer to everything and committed himself to nothing, and ended with saying, "Now this gawk of a Hölluson is setting up to be a man and is putting on airs. Do you suppose Thorgils will ever run into anybody who won't put up with all his nonsense? Of course, he is a big fellow and a stout one, and yet men of his kind have been known to lose their life." Snorri made Audgisl a present of a decorated axe when he came to leave.

In the spring Thorgils Hölluson and Black Thorstein went down south into the Borgarfjord country to offer Helgi's sons and his other kinsmen payment of a composition for their father's death. They came to terms, and a good and valuable payment was agreed on. Thorstein paid two-thirds of the sum and Thorgils was to pay one-third and was to make payment at the Althing. Thorgils rode down to the Thing that summer, and when they came out on the lava-fields near the grounds they saw a woman come walking to meet them. She was

enormously tall. Thorgils rode forward to meet her, but she drew out of the way and chanted this:

Kosti fyrdar
ef frami þykiast
ok varist við
svá vélum Snorra.
Engi mun viðvarast.
Vitr er Snorri.[1]

Then she went her way. And Thorgils said, "It has not usually been so when you have wished me well, that you have been leaving the Thing when I was coming." Thorgils then rode down on the Thing-grounds and to his own booth; and all was quiet through the early part of the Thing.

On a certain day during the Thing the folks were hanging out their clothes to dry, when this thing happened; Thorgils had a certain blue hood-cloak which was hung out on the booth wall, and the cloak was heard to recite these verses:

Hángir vát á vegg
veit hattkilan bragð.
þingit optar þurr.
þeigi dyl ek at hún viti tvö.[2]

This was considered a great marvel.

The next day after this took place Thorgils went across

[1] Be very careful
you who stand high
and so avoid
the wiles of Snorri.
None can escape them.
Wise is Snorri.

[2] Hanging wet on the wall
the hatpeak knows a trick.
Oftener dried at the Thing
I am not saying she would not know two.

the river to the west bank to make his payment to Helgi's sons. He sat down on the slope just above the row of booths. With him was his foster-brother Haldor, and there were several others along with them. Helgi's sons came out to meet them. Thorgils then started to count out the silver. Audgisl Thorarinson was walking about near by, and just as Thorgils was counting eleven Audgisl struck with his axe, and it seemed to them all that the head called "eleven" as it tumbled off his neck. Audgisl ran to the Vatzfirding booths, but Haldor ran close after him and struck him dead in the doorway of the booth. The tidings of this got to Snorri in his booth, that Thorgils Hölluson had been killed; but he replied, "You must be mistaken. It must be that Thorgils has killed someone." And the man said, "All the same, his head came off from his trunk." "In that case maybe it is all true," said Snorri. These two killings were duly paid up, as is told in the saga of Thorgils Hölluson.

LXVIII. Of Gudrun's marriage to Thorkel Eyolfson.

This same summer when Thorgils Hölluson was killed a ship came into Bjarnarhafn. This was owned by Thorkel Eyolfson. He was by that time so wealthy a man that he owned two merchant vessels. The second one came into the Hrutafjord, at Bordeyri, and both were loaded with timber. And so soon as Snorri Godi heard of Thorkel's coming he rode down to the landing. Thorkel met him with the most cordial greetings. Thorkel had a good deal of drink in his cargo, too, and was very free with it. They also had much to talk about. Snorri asked for the news from Norway. Thorkel told all there was to tell, full and freely. In his turn Snorri related what things had taken place here while Thorkel had been out of the country. "And now it seems to me that the right thing for you," said Snorri, "just as I told you before you went away, is to quit trading and settle down and take up with this marriage which we were speaking of at that time." Thorkel answered, "I can see which way you are headed. And I am quite of the same mind now as when we were talking it over before. For I am not the one to grudge myself the best and noblest match there is to be had, if it can be brought about." Snorri told him, "I stand ready and willing to speak for you in this suit. And both of those difficulties that once seemed so formidable to you in case you were to be married to Gudrun are out of the way now. Bolli has been avenged

and Thorgils is put out of the way." Thorkel replied, "Your scheming runs deep, Snorri. And I will certainly do my best about this marriage."

Snorri stayed on by the ship for several days. Then they took a ten-oared boat which lay beside the vessel and set out, twenty-five of them. They went to Helgafell. Gudrun made Snorri very welcome. They were served with the very best of everything. And when they had spent one night there Snorri called Gudrun aside for a talk with her and said, "This is the state of the case. I have come here in behalf of my friend, Thorkel Eyolfson. He is now here, as you see. And his errand here is to ask your hand in marriage. Thorkel is a man of good standing. You know also all there is to know of his birth and deeds. Also, he is not without means. We all consider him the one man who is best fitted to become a chieftain in this west-country, if he will take it upon himself. Thorkel is made much of when he is in this country, and yet he is rated much higher among the best people in Norway when he is there." Then answered Gudrun, "My two sons will have most to say in this matter, Thorleik and Bolli. And you, Snorri, are the only third person whom I will always consult in everything that matters much to me; for you have ever given me sound advice." Snorri said that to him it was a matter of course that Thorkel was not to be refused.

Snorri then called in Gudrun's sons. He then brought the proposal up before them and showed them how great an advantage they would gain from the connection with Thorkel, by reason of his wealth and his help, and he spoke of it all very smoothly. Then Bolli answered him, "My mother is the one who can best judge of all this. I am ready to agree to whatever she decides. And of course we are inclined to make much of the fact that you speak for it, Snorri; for you have done exceeding well by us in many ways." Then Gudrun spoke, "We

shall have to be guided very much by Snorri in all this; for always have we profited by your advice." Snorri spoke for it in every word he uttered, and the upshot was that a marriage was arranged between Gudrun and Thorkel. Snorri offered to take care of the wedding feast. That suited Thorkel very well, "for I have no lack of means to supply anything you like." Then Gudrun spoke, "It is my wish to have this wedding take place here at Helgafell. It will be no hardship for me to stand the expense of it. I am going to ask neither Thorkel nor anyone else to be at any pains about this thing." "Ever do you show yourself, Gudrun, to be a high-minded and able woman," said Snorri. So it was arranged that the wedding was to take place at Helgafell six weeks before the end of summer. When this had been arranged Snorri and Thorkel took their leave and went their way. Snorri went home and Thorkel went back to his ship. He spent the summer back and forth between Tunga and the ship.

The time of the wedding is at hand. Gudrun makes many and large preparations. Snorri Godi came on to the wedding in company with Thorkel, and between them they had near sixty men; and it was a very select company, for nearly all the men were decked out in dyed clothing. Gudrun had near one hundred (120) fore-guests assembled to meet them. The two brothers, Bolli and Thorleik, rode out to meet Snorri's company on the way, together with their fore-guests. Snorri and his company were very courteously welcomed. Their horses and wraps were taken in charge, and they were conducted into the house. Thorkel and Snorri with their company occupied the nobler bench, and Gudrun's fore-guests the lower one.

LXIX. Of the wedding, and of Gunnar Thidrandabani.

GUNNAR THIDRANDABANI (Slayer of Thidrandi) had been sent to Gudrun that fall for safe-keeping. She had also taken him in, and his name was kept secret. Gunnar had been outlawed for killing Thidrandi Geitisson of Krossavik, as is related in the Njardvikinga Saga. He had kept in close hiding because there were many powerful men who had a call to follow up the case.

On the first evening of the wedding feast, when the folks were going to the hand-wash, there was a big man in waiting at the water-butts. He was broad-shouldered and full-chested, and this man was wearing a wide hat on his head. Thorkel asked him who he was. The man gave himself a name out of his own fancy. Thorkel said to him, "You don't seem to be telling the truth. You look more like Gunnar Thidrandabani. And if you are as game a fellow as they all make out, then you will scarcely want to hide your name." Then Gunnar answered him, "You are very curious about it. And I guess I have no call to hide from you either. You have not mistaken your man. And now what are you going to do about me?" Thorkel told him he would take care to let him know about that right soon; and he called on his men to seize him. But Gudrun was sitting in the next room on the dais with her women about her with their white linen kerchiefs about their heads, and as soon as she was aware of what was doing she

stepped down from the bridal bench and called on her men to stand by Gunnar, and told them to spare no man who offered to do him any mischief. Gudrun had much the larger force. So that things were turning out quite otherwise than had been looked for. Snorri Godi went in between and called on the men to lay off this tempest. "Quite plainly, Thorkel, it is for you not to be so forward about this business. This should show you how able a woman Gudrun is, if she is more than a match for the two of us." Thorkel said he had promised his namesake Thorkel Geitisson that he would kill Gunnar if he came out into the west country, "and he is a very good friend of mine." Snorri told him, "What is much more to the point is that you will have to do as we choose. And that is the main consideration for yourself, too; for you will never find such a wife as Gudrun even if you search far and wide." And so, with Snorri's entreaties, and also because he saw that what he was saying was the truth, Thorkel quieted down, and Gunnar was safely sent away that evening.

After this the wedding feast went forward well and merrily. And when the festivities came to an end, then the folks got ready to leave. Thorkel gave presents of very great value to Snorri, as well as to all of the best people. Snorri invited Bolli home with him and asked him to make his home with him at any time when it might suit him. This Bolli accepted and rode home with him to Tunga.

Thorkel now took up his abode at Helgafell and took over the management of the estate; for he was no less capable in that work than in driving his trade overseas. He set about rebuilding the house that fall, and had it all done by the beginning of winter, and it was a large and sightly house. A great affection set in between Thorkel and Gudrun.

The winter passed over. In the spring Gudrun asked

him what he was willing to do for Gunnar Thidrandabani. Thorkel said that was for her to see to. "You have taken so strong a hand in that matter that nothing is likely to content you unless he is sent away in honorable fashion." Gudrun replied that he had guessed right. "I want you to give him a ship," said she, "together with such other things as he can not do without." Thorkel answered, and he smiled with it, "You have no mind for small things at any time, Gudrun," said he, "and such a thing would not be like you anyway. This will be done to your taste." And so it was. Gunnar accepted the gifts quite gratefully. "I may never be so fore-handed as to be able to repay all the favor you have shown me." Gunnar went abroad, to Norway. Then he went back to his own home. This Gunnar was a very wealthy man and a very great chieftain and a man of honor.

LXX. Thorleik Bollason goes to Norway; Bolli Bollason marries Snorri's daughter Thordis.

THORKEL EYOLFSON came to be a good deal of a chieftain. He took much thought of his friendships and his standing among men. He was one of the leading men of the countryside and notable for his conduct of causes at law; though nothing is to be told here of his litigations. Thorkel was the most powerful man in all the Breidafjord country in his lifetime, excepting Snorri. Thorkel was a thrifty man in the management of his property. He built up all the housing at Helgafell in a large and substantial way. He also staked out the foundations for a church and made known that he planned to bring home church-timber. Thorkel and Gudrun had a son who was named Gellir (Howler). He grew right soon to be a promising lad. Bolli Bollason stayed sometimes at Tunga, sometimes at Helgafell. Snorri used him right well. Thorleik Bollason lived at Helgafell. The two brothers were large men, strong and hardy, and Bolli was in every way the better man. Thorkel used his stepsons very well.

Bolli was now sixteen years old and Thorleik twenty. Then Thorleik spoke to his mother and said that he would like to go abroad. "I am getting tired of sitting at home like a woman. I would like to be allowed a stock of goods for a trading voyage." Thorkel told him in answer, "I believe I have never been a hindrance to you brothers during this time since this relation between us began.

And now it strikes me as altogether right and proper that you should want to see something of life among other people outside. For I expect you to prove an able man wherever you go and in all that you have to do with men of substance and standing." Thorleik said he would not take a large stock of goods; "for I am not sure how well I will be able to manage. I am a young man and ignorant of many things." Thorkel told him to take whatever he liked. Then Thorkel bought for Thorleik an interest in a ship which was laid up at Dögurdarnes. Thorkel went with him to the ship and saw to it that he was properly fitted out from home in all respects. So Thorleik went abroad that summer. At the time he came to Norway King Olaf the Saint was overlord of the country. Thorleik went at once to see King Olaf. The king received him kindly and counted up his kin and connections and invited him to become his guest. This Thorleik accepted. He spent the winter with the king and was made one of the king's court, and the king showed him special favor. Thorleik was counted a very gallant gentleman, and he spent more than one winter at King Olaf's court.

Now is to be told of Bolli Bollason. When he was eighteen years old, in the spring, he spoke to his stepfather Thorkel and his mother and asked them to turn over the inheritance coming to him from his father. Gudrun asked him what he had in mind in asking them to make the payment. Bolli answered, "What I want is to have a wife got for me. I will ask you, Stepfather Thorkel," said Bolli, "to act as my spokesman in the suit and see that it goes through." Thorkel asked him who was the lady that he was thinking of. Bolli replied, "There is a woman by the name of Thordis. She is a daughter of Snorri Godi. She is the one woman whom I have a mind to get. And I shall not be marrying in a hurry if I do not get her. And it means very much to me to have this go through." Thorkel answered him,

"It is only right and due, my friend, for me to be your spokesman in this suit, if you are counting on it. I am thinking that Snorri will make no difficulty about this suit, for he will be able to see that such an offer coming from you is right fair." And Gudrun said, "All I have to say, Thorkel, is that I will stick at nothing to help Bolli to such a match as he wants. The fact is both that I love him the best and also that he has always been the readiest of my children to do whatever I wished." Thorkel said he expected to do the right thing by Bolli when he came to leave home. "It is right and proper on all accounts; for I am sure Bolli has the makings of a good man."

A little while after this Thorkel and Bolli set out, and the company with them was a very large one. They went on their way till they came to Tunga. Snorri received them with due courtesy and attention; and there was an unlimited service of drink at Snorri's expense. Thordis Snorradaughter was living at home with her father. She was a beautiful woman and a striking one. And after they had spent several nights at Tunga, then Thorkel brought up their suit and spoke for a marriage alliance with Snorri on Bolli's behalf, and for wedlock with his daughter Thordis. Snorri's answer was, "Such a suit is reasonable; as might be expected of you. I shall favor this suit; for Bolli strikes me as a very promising young man, and I should consider that any woman is well married who is married to him. And yet what will decide it mostly is what Thordis thinks of it; for she shall marry none but the man whom she prefers." The question was put to Thordis, and she answered to this effect, that she would be guided by her father's discretion; saying that she would rather be married to Bolli, who was their neighbor, than to an unknown person from farther away. And when Snorri found that it was not distasteful to her to go with Bolli, then an agreement was come to and

pledges were exchanged. Snorri was to set up the wedding feast, and it was to come at midsummer.

With this Thorkel and Bolli rode back home to Helgafell, and Bolli then stayed at home until the time set for the wedding. Thorkel and Bolli then set out from home, and those with them who were picked for it. It was a very large company and a very gallant array. They rode on their way till they came to Tunga, and there their welcome was of the very best. It was a very large gathering, and the wedding feast was a magnificent one. And when the festivities drew to a close the guests made ready to leave. Snorri gave handsome presents to Thorkel and to Gudrun, both.

Bolli stayed in Tunga, and a fair love shortly grew up between Thordis and him. Snorri too took great pains to do well by Bolli, and used him even better than his own children. Bolli took to it kindly, and spent the year at Tunga well content. Next summer there came a ship in from the sea into Hvitá. A half-interest in this ship belonged to Thorleik Bollason, and the other half was owned by Norwegians. So soon as Bolli heard of it he rode down south to where the ship lay. Both the brothers were glad to see one another. Bolli stayed by the ship for several days. Then the brothers both rode on west to Helgafell. Thorkel received them very kindly, and so also Gudrun, and they invited Thorleik to stay with them over the winter, and this he accepted. Thorleik stopped at Helgafell a while. Afterward he rode down to Hvitá and had his ship laid up and had his goods brought home to Helgafell. Thorleik had done well, both in profits and in goodwill. For he was become a liegeman of the most noble King Olaf Haraldson. So now he was staying at Helgafell over the winter and Bolli was in Tunga.

LXXI. Of the settlement between the Bollasons and the Olafsons.

THROUGH the winter following Thorleik's return from abroad the two brothers were forever getting together and talking by themselves, and they took no part in games or diversions of any kind. And once upon a time when Thorleik was visiting in Tunga the two brothers kept at their talk all night long. Snorri then came to think they must be planning something serious. So Snorri broke in on the talk between the brothers. They greeted him courteously, and straightway let the matter drop. He duly returned their greetings. Presently Snorri spoke up and asked them, "What is it you are plotting, so that you can neither sleep nor eat?" Bolli answered, "It is not plotting. What we are talking about is of no consequence." And when Snorri found that they were set on hiding from him whatever it was they had in mind he began to doubt that they were likely to be talking about something which would lead to a deal of mischief if it went through. Snorri spoke again, "Now I have my doubts that it is neither gossip nor anecdotes you spend most of your talk on; and I should say that it is quite all right even if such is the case. Now, will you be so kind as to let me know, and don't keep anything from me. The three of us together will be quite as well able to plan this thing; for I will by no means hinder anything whatever from going through that will add anything to your profit or your good name." To Thorleik, Snorri seemed to be

talking sense, and he told him in a few words what they had in mind; that it was their intention to go after the Olafsons and make trouble for them. Their talk was that they now no longer fell short of an even break with the Olafsons, since Thorleik had been made a liegeman of King Olaf's and Bolli had become son-in-law of such a chieftain as Snorri. Snorri gave them the answer that "The score has been full paid for the killing of Bolli, since payment has been made of Helgi Hardbeinson. A good plenty of mischief has been brought on many people already, even if an end of it all is allowed to come some time." Then Bolli spoke up. "How is this, Snorri? Are you not just as sharp-set on helping us out now as you made out a little while ago? Thorleik would not have told you yet about this plan of ours if he had asked me. And as for your making out that Helgi was taken in vengeance for Bolli; it is a known fact that the killing of Helgi was paid for, while my father is unpaid." So when Snorri found that he could not talk them out of it, then Snorri offered to go between and arrange for a composition with the Olafsons, rather than let the run of manslaughter start over again. And to this the two brothers consented.

Presently after, Snorri rode in to Hjardarholt, with a few men. Haldor made him welcome and asked him to stay. Snorri said he would have to be riding back home, "But I have a particular business with you." Then they went on to talk, and Snorri made known his errand; saying it had come to his notice that Bolli and Thorleik were no longer content to leave their father unpaid-for by the Olafsons. "So now I am trying to make terms and see if we can put an end to this unhappy state of things between you and your kinsmen." Haldor took no offense at this, and answered, "It is quite well known to me that Thorgils Hölluson and the Bollasons had planned to make an onslaught on me or my brothers before you shifted the

feud for them, so that they took a fancy to kill Helgi Hardbeinson. You have been very decent about this matter; whatever else you may have had to do with earlier quarrels among us." Snorri told him, "I am much concerned to bring my errand to a good end and to get things into such shape that there will be peace between you. And I know the temper of these men with whom it rests to hold up the quarrel against you, that they will faithfully bide by any terms on which they agree." Haldor answered, "I will undertake, if my brothers are willing, to make payment for the killing of Bolli, in such an amount as those men may award who are elected to decide it. But I make reservation of all outlawry as well as of my Godord, and my homestead. So also the homesteads occupied by my brothers. Also I make the reservation that they are to hold their farms without encumbrance, so far as concerns the terms to be arranged; and each party is to choose its man for the award." Snorri replied, "It is a good and reasonable offer, and the two brothers will take it if they will pay any attention to what I say."

Snorri then rode back home and told the two brothers what his errand had come to; so also that he would have nothing more to do with this case of theirs at all if they did not accept these terms. Bolli told him to have it his own way, "and I will ask you, Snorri, to act for us on the award." Then Snorri sent word to Haldor that the terms had been accepted, and asked him to select his man to take part with him in the award. Haldor chose for the award in behalf of his side Steindor Thorlakson of Eyr. This peace-meeting was to take place at Drangar on the Skogarstrand at four weeks of summer. Thorleik Bollason rode back home to Helgafell, and all was quiet through the rest of the winter.

And when the time came round that had been fixed on for the meeting, then Snorri Godi came to the place with

the Olafsons, with a company of fifteen men altogether; and a like number came with Steindor to meet them. Snorri and Steindor then talked matters over and came to an agreement on the case. Then they made known their award, but it is not told how large their award was. But it is told that the payment was made punctually and that the compact was kept in good faith. It was at the Thorsnes Thing that the payments were made. Haldor made Bolli a present of a good sword, and Steindor Olafson gave Thorleik a shield, and that, too, was an article of value. The Thing then came to a close, and both parties appeared to have gained by the settlement.

LXXII. (Probably spurious). Thorleik and Bolli go abroad.

When they had come to this settlement, and Thorleik had then been in Iceland for two winters, Bolli made known that he was going abroad. Snorri spoke against it, and said, "To us it seems very doubtful what you will make of it. Now, if it is that you would like to have more to do with than you have had, then I shall be willing to find you a place of your own and stock it for you; and at the same time I will shift into your hands the oversight of affairs in the neighborhood and back you for all honorable preferment in every way. I believe all that will come easy, inasmuch as everybody is well disposed toward you already." Bolli answered him, "I have been thinking for a long time past that I would like to travel into the south countries for once in a way. Any man seems to me to know little if he has seen nothing outside of this Iceland here." And when Snorri found that Bolli had made up his mind about it, so that there was no use of speaking against it, then Snorri offered to let him have all the goods he wanted for the voyage. Bolli took the offer kindly and said he would want a large stock of goods. "I should like," said he, "to be no man's almsman, either here or in foreign parts." Bolli then rode down south to the Borgarfjord country and out to Hvitá and bought up the half-interest in the ship there from the men who owned it. The two brothers now owned the vessel between them. Bolli then rode back home into the West.

Bolli and Thordis had one daughter. She was named Herdis. This girl Gudrun adopted. She was a year old when she went to Helgafell. Thordis too lived there for a long time, and Gudrun was very fond of her.

LXXIII. (Probably spurious). Of Bolli Bollason in foreign parts.

So now the two brothers both went down to their ship. Bolli took a large stock of trade-goods along. They now freighted the vessel and made it ready. And when they were all ready they put to sea. They had to wait for a wind and they had a long outing. They reached Norway in the fall and made land in the north, in Drontheim. King Olaf was then in the east of the country and was sitting in the Vik (Christiania Fjord) and was preparing to spend the winter there. And when the brothers heard this, that the king was not coming north into Drontheim that fall, then Thorleik said that he was going on east along the coast to King Olaf. Bolli replied, "I have not much of a mind to go drifting about from one town to another in the fall of the year. It strikes me as a lot of hardship and privation. I am going to sit still here in town over winter. I am told that the king is coming north in the spring. But if he does not come, then I will say nothing against our going to meet him." Bolli had it his way.

They cleared their vessel and found lodgings in town. Very soon it came to be noticed that Bolli was a man who put himself forward and claimed precedence of other men. And he made good too, for he was a free spender. He soon came to be highly regarded among the Norwegians. Bolli kept a retinue of followers that winter in Drontheim, and it was to be noticed wherever he frequented their drinking-clubs that his men were better

provided both in dress and weapons than the rest of the townsfolk. So also he paid, himself, for all his retinue whenever they joined in these drinking-bouts. And in keeping with this was also his open-handedness and lordly way in other things. So the two brothers spent the winter in town.

The king spent that winter in the east, at Sarpsborg, and word came out of the east that the king was not expected to come north. In the early spring the brothers got out their ship and ran down along the shore and into the east. They had a good passage and came into Sarpsborg and went at once to see King Olaf. The king was very gracious to Thorleik, his liegeman, and to all his company. Presently the king asked who that gallant man might be who was in company with Thorleik. And he answered, "This is my brother and his name is Bolli." "Indeed, and he is a fine man," said the king. The king afterward invited the brothers to stay with him as his guests. This they accepted with thanks, and they stayed on with the king through the springtime The king was gracious to Thorleik, as he had been before, and yet he made much more of Bolli; for the king found him to be far superior to other men.

And when the spring was passing the two brothers had a talk about what to do. Thorleik asked if Bolli had a mind to go out to Iceland that summer, "or are you intending to stay longer in Norway?" Bolli answered him, "I am going to do neither. And to tell the truth, it was my notion when I left Iceland that you should not hear of me next door. Now I should like you to take over our ship, my friend." Thorleik was sorry to part from him, "but you will have your own way in this as well as in other things." This same proposal they brought before the king, and he answered them in this way. "Will you not stay with us longer, Bolli?" said the king. "It would seem the better way to me to have

you stay with me for a time. I will bestow on you the same honorable title which I have already given your brother Thorleik." But Bolli answered him, "I should be very glad indeed, Sire, to be made your liegeman. But first I wish to go on in my travels into those parts that I had already made up my mind to visit and which I have long wished to see. But this offer I shall be very glad to accept if I am fated to return." "You will have to go your own way, Bolli," said the king, "for you Icelanders are a self-willed lot in all things. Yet I will close with saying that you, Bolli, are to my mind the most notable man that has come out of Iceland in my time."

And when Bolli had been given leave of the king he made ready to go on his travels and took passage on a large trading-vessel that was bound for Denmark. Bolli passed the next winter in Denmark. He took with him a large stock of goods. Several men of his company too went with him. Thorleik stayed behind with King Olaf while Bolli went forward on his travels and was greatly honored by the best people wherever he went. And when Bolli had spent one winter in Denmark, then he set out again into far countries and went on until he came out into Mikligard (Byzantium). He had been there but a little while before he took service among the Varangians. We have heard no report that any Norseman had entered the service of the Gard King (Byzantine Emperor) before Bolli Bollason. He stayed in Mikligard for many years together and was rated a most capable and sturdy man in everything that might prove a man, and ever he was to be found among the foremost. And the Varangians made very much of Bolli as long as he stayed in Mikligard.

LXXIV. Thorkel Eyolfson goes to Norway for church-timber.

Now the tale returns to Thorkel Eyolfson, how he is sitting on his farmstead and looking after the concerns of his chieftaincy. Gellir, the son of Thorkel and Gudrun, grew up at home. He soon grew to be a manly fellow and made many friends.

It is related that Thorkel once upon a time told a dream of his to Gudrun. "I dreamed," said he, "that I had a beard which was so long and wide that it spread all over Breidafjord." Thorkel asked her to find the meaning of it. Gudrun asked him, "What do you think is the meaning of your dream?" "It seems plain to me that so is my power to spread all over the Breidafjord country." "May be that is it," said Gudrun, "but I should rather take it that you are to soak your beard in the Breidafjord water."

That same summer Thorkel got out his ship and set sail for Norway. His son Gellir was then twelve years old and he went with his father on the voyage. Thorkel gave out that he was going after timber for a church and then sailed out to sea as soon as he was ready. They made the land in Norway, somewhat northerly. King Olaf was then in Drontheim. Thorkel went directly to see the king, and his son Gellir with him. They were well received and Thorkel was made so much of that winter by the king that it has been the common report that the king made him a gift of no less value than one-hundred marks

of pure silver. The king gave a cloak to Gellir at Christmas, and it was a very fine garment and of great value. King Olaf was building a church in the town that winter, of timber. It was designed to be a minster of large size, and everything about it was very choice indeed. In the spring the timber which the king had given to Thorkel was delivered at the ship. The timbers were both big and sound, for Thorkel kept a close watch of it.

It happened early one morning that the king was out and about with a few men following him. He caught sight of a man on top of the church which he was building, and the king recognised the man, that it was Thorkel Eyolfson and that he was taking the measure of all the main timbers, sills and cross-beams and uprights. The king went up at once and spoke to him, "What is doing now, Thorkel? Are you thinking of patterning after this building in the church-timber you are freighting to Iceland?" Thorkel answered him, "So it is, Sire." Then King Olaf spoke and said, "Cut off two ells from each of your main timbers, and your church will still be the greatest on Iceland." Thorkel rejoined, "You may take back your timber if you think you have been giving too freely. But I am not going to cut off one stick as much as an ell long. I shall find a way and I am content to get other timber for my use." Then the king told him, gentle and soberly, "It is true, Thorkel, that you are a notable man, and yet just now you are going too far. It is mere presumption for any farmer's son to match himself against us. It is not that I grudge you the timber, if you are fated to make a church of it. But your church will never be large enough to contain the whole of your conceit. Indeed it comes into my mind that no one will get much good of this timber, and that you are not likely to make anything of human use out of this timber." Nothing more was said on either side. The king turned away, and it was remarked that he was not pleased to have

Thorkel pay no attention to what he asked of him. Yet the king let none of this appear openly, and he took leave of Thorkel in the most friendly fashion.

Thorkel went aboard ship and put to sea. They had favorable winds and were not out long. Thorkel came ashore in the Hrutafjord. He set out at once and rode down from the ship and home to Helgafell. There they all were glad to see him. Thorkel gained renown from this voyage. He had the ship laid up and cared for and put the church-timber in safe-keeping. So now Thorkel was sitting at home through the winter on his own place with a large retinue about him, and in every way he spent that winter in great state. And Gudrun had nothing to say against it, but told him that that is what riches are good for, for men to make the most of themselves. And then too, whatever Gudrun had use for to make a grand display was also forthcoming. Thorkel sold off many articles of great value that winter to his friends, things which he had brought from abroad.

LXXV. Thorstein Kuggason and Thorkel Eyolfson bargain with Haldor Olafson for the Hjardarholt lands.

After Christmas this winter Thorkel set out from home up north into the Hrutafjord country to bring his timber home. First he rode up country into the Dales and from there to Ljárskog to his cousin Thorstein and engaged men and horses. Then he went on north into Hrutafjord and stayed there for some time to arrange about the freighting. He gathered in horses from the countryside about the fjord; for Thorkel did not want to make a second trip, if he could so arrange it. All this was not to be done in a hurry. Thorkel was busy with this work far into Lent. He got the work under way. He freighted the timber south on more than twenty horses, and left it lying on the Ljár beach. He expected presently to move it out to Helgafell by boat. Thorstein owned a large lugger, and Thorkel was expecting to use this boat when he came to go on home. Thorkel stopped over at Ljárskog through Lent, for there was a close friendship between the two cousins.

Thorstein spoke to Thorkel one day and said that this would be a convenient time for them to run in to Hjardarholt. "I want to see Haldor about buying land of him. He is short of livestock since he paid composition to the Bollasons for their father. And his land is just what I

would like to own." Thorkel told him it was for him to say. So they set out from home with a company of some twenty men. They came into Hjardarholt. Haldor received them courteously and was very free and talkative. There were few men about the place, because Haldor had sent his men up north into Steingrimsfjord. A whale had come ashore there in which he was part owner. Beinir the Strong was at home. He was the only one still living of the men who had been with Olaf, Haldor's father.

Haldor had spoken to Beinir when he saw Thorstein's company come riding in. "I know just what the two cousins are after. They will want to buy my land of me. And if that is the case then they will call me to one side to talk it over. It is my guess that they will sit down one on each side of me. And if they offer me any kind of violence, then it is for you to be no slower about going for Thorstein than I will be with Thorkel. You have long stood faithfully by me and my folks. I have also sent for men to come in from our neighbors, and I should like to have it fall out so that help should come in about the time we have done talking." Now, when the day was passing Thorstein turned to Haldor and asked him to go aside with them for a talk, "We have some business with you." Haldor replied that would be quite right. Thorstein spoke to his men and told them they need not go along with them; but Beinir went along none the less, because things seemed to be turning out very much the way Haldor had guessed they would.

They went off quite a ways out into the fields. Haldor was wearing an embroidered cloak pinned with a long brooch, as the fashion was at that time. Haldor sat down on the ground and the two cousins sat down one on each side of him; and they sat very close, on the skirts of his cloak, and Beinir was standing at their back with a big axe in his hands. Thorstein then said, "What has

brought me here is that I wish to buy some land of you. I am bringing this up now because my cousin Thorkel is with me just now. It has seemed to me that this would be a convenience to both of us, for I have been told that you are somewhat short of livestock, running on valuable land. I am ready to trade you farmlands, such as may well suit you, and will give you such an amount to boot as we may arrange for." Haldor did not hold off stiffly at the outset, and they went on to talk about the details of the trade. And as he seemed to them not to be unwilling, Thorkel too came into the talk and did his best to bring about a trade. Haldor rather drew back more and more, and they pressed their offers on him all the more eagerly. So that by and by it turned out that the higher they bid the farther off they were. Then Thorkel spoke up, "Don't you see, Cousin Thorstein, how things are going? Haldor has been leading us on about this business all day long and he has kept us sitting here for a joke and a laughing-stock. Now if you have a mind to buy the land, then we will have to come to closer quarters." Thorstein then declared that he wanted to know what to expect. He told Haldor to come out in the open and tell them whether he was going to let him buy the land. Haldor replied, "I fancy there is no need of keeping you in the dark about it; that you are likely to go home without a bargain tonight." Then said Thorstein, "I too reckon that there is no call to put off telling you what has already been settled on; that you will just have to choose between two things, and that we have the upper hand by force of numbers. Either you can come to terms willingly and so get our goodwill in this bargain, or you will stick out your hand perforce and handsel me the lands of Hjardarholt." Now, when Thorstein spoke out openly in this fashion, then Haldor jumped up all of a sudden, so that the brooch tore out of his cloak, and replied, "Something else is due to happen before I promise what I don't want

to." "And what might that be?" asked Thorstein. "A poll-axe will be sticking in your head, driven by the worst man in sight. And that will put an end to your bombast and knavery." Then Thorkel spoke up, "That is a wicked prophecy, and one that will come to nothing. And now, Haldor, I should say there is plenty of reason why you should have to let go your lands and get no pay for them." But Haldor answered him, "You will be grabbing seaweed in Breidafjord before I am forced to handsel you my land."

Haldor then went back to the house. By this time the men were coming in that Haldor had sent for. Thorstein was all in a rage and wanted to set upon Haldor. Thorkel begged him to do nothing of the kind, "and indeed that would be a most unseemly thing to do during this holy season. But so soon as this Easter season is over, then I will say nothing against our getting at him." Haldor told them that he expected to be ready for them at any time. So they rode away, and there was much talk between them about this business of theirs. Thorstein said it was true that their raid had indeed turned out very poorly. "But why were you so afraid to go for Haldor, Cousin Thorkel, and give him something to be ashamed of?" Thorkel's answer was, "Did you not see Beinir standing at your back with his axe all balanced? There was nothing to be done about it, for he would just have sunk his axe into your head if I had made a move to do anything." So they rode on home. Lent now was passing and holy week was at hand.

LXXVI. Of Thorkel Eyolfson's drowning in Breidafjord; 1026.

EARLY in the morning of Maundy Thursday Thorkel got ready to go. Thorstein spoke strongly against it; "for the weather looks doubtful to me," said he. Thorkel said the weather would do quite well, "and you are not to hinder me now, Cousin, for I want to get home for Easter." So Thorkel put out the lugger and set to work loading it. Thorstein carried the load back ashore as fast as Thorkel and his men loaded it on. Then Thorkel told him, "Better quit that now, Cousin, and don't hinder our getting away. For this once you are not going to have your way." Thorstein answered him, "Then the choice rests with the one of us who will choose for the worse. And much is likely to come of this voyage." Thorkel replied with a word of good omen for their meeting again.

Thorstein then went back home very much cast down. He went into the house and lay down and called for a pillow to be put under his head. The maid noticed that tears were falling on the pillow out of his eyes. After a little a great blast of wind struck the house. And Thorstein said, "There you can already hear the crash of cousin Thorkel's undoing."

Now there is to be told of how Thorkel and his company fared. They sailed out along Breidafjord that day, ten of them all told on the boat. The wind presently stiffened a good deal, and it grew into a furious gale before it let up. They held bravely to their course, and they were stout and skilful men. Thorkel had brought the sword

Sköfnung with him and it was in the boat's locker. They went on until they got as far as Bjarnarey. Folks saw the boat from both shores. But when they had got that far, then a squall struck their sail and overturned the boat. Thorkel was drowned there together with all the men who were with him. The timber drifted all about the islands, far and wide. The corner-posts were washed ashore on the island that has since then been called Stafey (Post Island). Sköfnung was stuck fast in the frame timbers of the lugger; he was found on Sköfnungsey.

Now on the evening of the same day on which Thorkel and his men were drowned, this thing happened at Helgafell; that Gudrun was on her way to the church about the time when the folks were gone to bed, and as she was going in at the churchyard gate she saw a spook standing in front of her. He leaned over her and spoke, "Great tidings, Gudrun," said he. Gudrun replied, "Just keep still about it, you poor thing!" Gudrun went on into the church as she had set out to do, and when she got to the church door she seemed to see Thorkel and his men, that they had got home and were standing outside the church. She saw that the sea water was running from their clothes. Gudrun said nothing to them and went on into the church and stayed there as long as she had occasion. She afterward went back into the living-room, as she expected that Thorkel and his men would be there. But when she got into the house there was no one there. And then Gudrun grew very thoughtful about these things coming on all at once. On Good Friday Gudrun sent her men out to find out about what Thorkel and his men were doing, some of them in along the beach and some out among the islands. The wreckage was by that time drifted far and wide among the islands as well as on the beaches along both shores. On the Saturday before Easter the tidings were known about the countryside, and they seemed very grave, for Thorkel had been a

great chieftain. Thorkel was forty-eight years old at the time he was drowned, and this (A. D. 1026) was four years before the death of King Olaf the Saint. Gudrun took the loss of Thorkel much to heart, and yet she bore up stoutly under it. Very little of the church-timber was recovered.

Gellir was then fourteen years old. With his mother's help he took over the care of the estate and also took up the chieftaincy; and it soon appeared that he was well fitted for a leader of men. In time Gudrun came to be a great religious devotee. She was the first woman in Iceland who learned the Psalter. She spent long hours nightly in church at her prayers. Herdis Bolladaughter was often with her through the night. Gudrun was very fond of Herdis. It is related that on a certain night the girl Herdis dreamed that there came a woman to her. The woman was wearing a cloth cloak. She did not like the woman's looks. The woman spoke to her and said, "Tell this to your grandmother, that I am out of patience with her because she wallows on top of me every night and drips on me certain drops so hot that it quite scorches me. I am telling this to you because I like you a little better. And yet there is something uncanny about you too. And yet I might get on well enough with you if it were not that Gudrun is quite out of the question." Presently Herdis awoke and told Gudrun her dream. Gudrun took it to be a good omen. Next morning Gudrun had the planks of the church floor taken up at the place where she was in the habit of kneeling. She had the ground underneath dug up. There they found bones down in the ground. They were bluish and evil-looking bones. They also found a brooch and a great witch-stick. So it was considered that the place had been a witch burial of some kind. Those bones were afterward carried far off out of the way and left where no one would be likely to go.

LXXVII. (Probably spurious). Of Bolli Bollason's return.

When four years were gone by since Thorkel Eyolfson was drowned, there came a ship into Eyjafjord. This was owned by Bolli Bollason. The crew was made up mostly of Norwegians. Bolli brought out with him a large stock and many articles of great value which the great ones of the best people had given him. Bolli was so choice of his appearance at the time when he so returned from his travels that he would wear no garment except only of satin and brocade, and all his weapons were done in gold. He was nicknamed Bolli the Magnificent. He told his shipmates that he was going out west to his own countryside, and left his vessel in the care of his shipmates. Bolli rode away from the ship with a company of twelve men all told. They were all dressed in satin, these followers of Bolli, and rode on gold-mounted saddles. They were all fine-looking men, and yet Bolli surpassed them all. He was then wearing clothes of brocade, which the king of Byzantium had given him. Over all he wore a red satin cloak. He was girt about with Fotbit, whose hilts were gold-mounted and whose grip was wound with gold wire. He had a gilded helmet on his head and a red shield on his flank, on which a knight was drawn in gold. In his hand he carried an anlace, as was the fashion in foreign parts. And wherever they took lodgings along the road the women-folk found time for nothing else but to look

at Bolli and the display of him and his company. In such courtly fashion did Bolli ride out into the west country till he came in time to Helgafell with all his retinue. Gudrun was overjoyed with the coming of her son Bolli. Bolli made no long stay there before he rode up country to Sælingsdals-Tunga, to his father-in-law Snorri and Thordis his wife. It was a very festive meeting. Snorri invited Bolli to come and stay, with as many men as he liked. Bolli accepted, and he made his home with Snorri over winter, together with the men who had ridden down with him out of the North. Bolli was made famous by these adventures of his. Snorri was at no less pains to serve Bolli with every kindness now than when he stayed with him before.

LXXVIII. Of Snorri's death, and of Gudrun's old age and the close of her life.

When Bolli had been back in Iceland for a year, then Snorri Godi took sick. This illness was not of a violent sort. Snorri was bedridden for a very long time; and when the sickness grew upon him, then Snorri called his kinsfolk and his household about him. Then he spoke to Bolli and said, "It is my wish that you are to take over this homestead and to take the charge of affairs about the countryside after my time. I have no less of a mind to your success and renown than to that of my own sons. The one of my sons that I count on making the best man among them is not in this country now. It is Haldor." Snorri died soon after. He was then sixty-seven years old. This was one year after the death of King Olaf the Saint. So says Ari Frodi (The Scholar) the Priest. Snorri was buried at Tunga. Bolli and Thordis came into the property at Tunga, as Snorri had spoken for, and Snorri's sons were content to allow it. Bolli grew to be a man of much consequence and with many friends.

Herdis Bolladaughter grew up at Helgafell and was a woman of great beauty. Örn, son of Hermund Illugason, wooed her and she was married to him. Their son was Kodran, who married Gudrun Sigmundsdaughter; Kodran's son was Hermund, who married Ulfheid, daughter of Bishop Runolf Ketilson; their sons were Ketil,

who became abbot of Helgafell, and Rein and Kodran and Styrmir; their daughter was Thorvör, married to Skeggi Brandson, and from them comes the Skogverja kindred. Ospak was the name of another son of Bolli and Thordis; Ospak's daughter was Gudrun, married to Thorarin Brandson; their son was Brand who set up the benefice at Husafell; his son was Sighvat the priest, who occupied the place for a long time. Gellir Thorkelson also married. His wife was Valgerd, daughter of Thorgils Arason of Reykjanes. Gellir went abroad and was for a time at the court of King Magnus the Good and was by him given twelve ounces of gold and many other things of value. Gellir's sons were Thorkel and Thorgils; Thorgils's son was Ari the Scholar; Ari's son was named Thorgils, and his son was Ari the Strong.

Gudrun was now growing to be very old and was living in such penance as has already been recounted a while back. She was the first nun and anchorite in Iceland. So also it is the common talk that Gudrun had been the noblest of all women of equal birth in this country. It is related that once upon a time Bolli came to Helgafell; for Gudrun was exceeding glad to have him come to see her. Bolli had been sitting with his mother for a long time and they had been talking of many things. Then said Bolli, "Will you tell me something, Mother, which I am curious to know? What man have you loved the most?" Gudrun answered him, "Thorkel was a man of great power and a great chieftain; but no man of them has been a finer looking man than Bolli or a better man all and all. Thord Ingunnarson was a very clever man and a great lawyer. I have nothing to say of Thorvald." Then said Bolli, "I am quite clear about this that you are telling me about what manner of men your husbands have been. But you have not told whom you loved the most. You need no longer hide it now." "You drive me hard, my son," said Gudrun, "but if I must tell this to anyone

I would rather choose you for it." Bolli begged her to do so. Then Gudrun said, "I was the worst to him I loved the best." "I take it," said Bolli, "that it is all told plain enough now," and said she had been very kind to tell him this that he had been so curious about.

Gudrun lived to be an old woman and the story goes that she lived to be blind. Gudrun died at Helgafell, and there she is buried. Gellir lived at Helgafell till old age and many notable things are told of him. He also comes into many of the sagas, although there is little told about him here. He built a magnificent church at Helgafell, as Arnor Jarlaskald (The Earl's Poet) bears witness in the elegy which he made about Gellir, and there he speaks plainly of this matter. When Gellir was getting well along into old age he set out travelling out of Iceland. He came to Norway, and made no long stay there. He left that country directly and went on a pilgrimage to Rome to visit Saint Peter the Apostle. He was gone on this journey for a very long time. In time he turned back north and came into Denmark. There he was taken sick and was long bedridden and received the viaticum and extreme unction. He then died and was buried at Roskilde. Gellir had carried Sköfnung away with him, and he was never recovered afterward; he had been taken out of the grave-mound of Hrolf Kraki. When news of Gellir's decease reached Iceland his son Thorkel took over his patrimony of Helgafell. Gellir's other son Thorgils was drowned in the Breidafjord while a young man, and all the boat's crew with him. Thorkel Gellisson was an extremely thrifty person, and is said to have been a very great scholar. And herewith closes the saga of the Laxdale folks.

LXXIX. (Accounted spurious, together with what follows). Of the murder of young Olaf Thordarson.

At the time when Bolli Bollason was living at Tunga, as has already been related, Arnor Kerlingarnef (Old-Woman's-Nose) lived up north in the Skagafjord country, at Miklibæ, a son of Björn Thordarson of Höfdi. A man by the name of Thord was living at Marbæli. His wife's name was Gudrun. They were thrifty people and well-to-do. Their son was named Olaf. He was a young boy and a very promising one. Thord's wife Gudrun was near kin to Bolli Bollason, being a maternal cousin of his. Thord's son Olaf was named for Olaf Peacock of Hjardarholt. The Hjaltasons, Thord and Thorvald, were living at Hof in Hjaltadal. They were notable chieftains. There was a certain man by the name of Thorolf, known as the Pilot. He lived on the place called Thúfur (The Tussocks). He was ill-humored and had a violent temper. He owned a vicious gray bull.

Thord of Marbæli was in the overseas trade in company with Arnor. Thorolf the Pilot was married to a kinswoman of Arnor's, but at the same time he was a Thing-client of the Hjaltasons. He was on bad terms with his neighbors, and indeed it was a habit of his, and most particularly with the folks at Marbæli. His bull was a good deal of a nuisance whenever he came home out of the commons. He mangled the neighbors' cattle and

could not be driven off by stoning him. And he broke fences too, and did damage in many ways. Thord of Marbæli spoke to Thorolf and asked him to take care of his bull. "We will not put up with the nuisance of him." Thorolf said he was not going to sit up with his cattle. With this Thord went back home. Not long after this Thord found out that the bull had been upsetting his peat stacks. Thord then ran to the spot with a spear in his hands, and when the bull saw him he came on in such a rush that he tore up the ground with his hoofs. Thord ran him through with the spear and he dropped dead on the ground. Thord went to see Thorolf and told him the bull was dead. "That is not much to brag of," said Thorolf, "but I shall be glad to do something for you that you will be sorry for." Thorolf scolded furiously, with a threat in every word.

Thord had some business away from home. His son Olaf was then some seven or eight years old. He had gone out playing outside of the farmyard, as children will, when Thorolf came on him. He ran the boy through with a spear. Then he went home and told his wife. She said, "That was a wicked thing to do, and a mean thing, and it will make trouble for you." And as she went on blaming him he left the place and went on to Miklibæ, to Arnor. They asked one another the news of the day. Thorolf told him about killing Olaf. "I am now looking to you to help me out, because you are my brother-in-law." "You are not going about this business with your eyes open," said Arnor, "if you count on my making more of my connection with you than of my own good name and decency. You need count on no help from me in this thing." Thorolf went on up the valley of Hjaltadal to Hóf and found the Hjaltasons and told them the state of the case, "and I am now here looking to you two brothers to help me out." Thord told him, "It is nothing but a shameful crime; and I will do nothing about

it for you." Thorvald had little to say. So Thorolf got nothing of them at that time.

He rode away and up the valley to Reykjar (Hot Springs). There he had a bath. In the evening he rode back down again and stopped close under the courtyard wall at Hóf and began talking to himself as if he had met some one else who had asked who he was. "My name is Thorolf," said he. "Where are you going, and what are you after?" said the make-believe man. Thorolf repeated all that had taken place, "and I have begged the Hjaltasons," said he, "to help me in my need." The make-believe replied, "There has been a great change since that time when they made that great funeral feast at which there were twelve hundred guests. These same chieftains have shrivelled up badly by this time if they will not even help out a single man at a pinch." Thorvald was out of doors at the time and overheard this talk. He came up and took the horse by the reins and told Thorolf to get down out of the saddle; "And yet there is no good to come of having to do with you and your foolish doings."

LXXX. Bolli Bollason comes into the case.

Now there is to be told of Thord, that he got home and heard of his son's being killed and was greatly shocked and grieved. His wife Gudrun told him, "The thing for you to do is formally to charge Thorolf with the boy's murder, and I will ride away to Tunga to see my cousin Bolli to see what he is willing to do to help us follow it up." So they did. And when Gudrun came to Tunga she was cordially received. She told Bolli about the killing of her son Olaf and asked him to take over the prosecution. He answered her, "It is not such a simple matter for me to reach out for satisfaction from these men up there in the North country. And then, too, I am told that the fellow has found shelter where it will not be easy to go after him." Yet Bolli took it over in the end, and Gudrun went back north and got home and told her husband Thord how the matter then stood. And so time passed for a while.

Along in the winter, after Christmas, there was a meeting called at Thverá in the Skagafjord country. To this meeting Thorvald called Starri of Guddale to come; he was a friend of the two brothers. Thorvald set out for the gathering, with his men, and when they reached Urdskriduholar (Landslide Hills) there came a man running down the hillside to them. It was Thorolf. He joined them and went on with Thorvald. And when they got near Thverá, then Thorvald told Thorolf, "Now you

are to take three ounces of silver [1] with you and lie hidden up the hillside back of the houses at Thverá. And this will be your signal, that I will turn my shield with the hollow of it facing you, in case it is safe for you to come on. The shield is white on the inside." And when Thorvald came into the gathering he met Starri there and talked with him. Thorvald told him, "The case is this. I want to ask you to take in Thorolf the Pilot for shelter and safe-keeping. I will give you three ounces of silver, and my friendship with it." "That is a man," said Starri, "who seems to me to have few friends, and I am not sure that good luck goes with him, but for our friendship's sake I will take him in." "Then you are doing the right thing," said Thorvald. He then turned his shield over, with the hollow side outward, and as soon as Thorolf saw it he came out in the open and Starri took him in. Starri had an underground lodging on his place in the Guddales, because there frequently were outlaws in his keeping; and then, too, he had some quarrels of his own outstanding.

[1] The customary weregeld.

LXXXI. Bolli Bollason makes Thorolf the Pilot outlaw at the Hegranes Thing.

Bolli Bollason took over the prosecution for the killing of Olaf. He set out from home and went north into the Skagafjord country with a company of thirty men. He came to Miklibæ and there he was well received. He told them how matters stood and why he came. "I am going to lay charges for manslaughter against Thorolf the Pilot at the Hegranes Thing which is to meet soon. I wish that you would come in with me on the case and let me have your backing." Arnor replied, "It seems to me, Bolli, that you are setting out on a doubtful errand in coming up here into the North country to deal with such an unscrupulous parcel of men as you will have to do with in this case. They are likely to make their defense a matter of force rather than of fair dealing. And yet, I take it, it is for you to do it. We will do what we can to see that the case goes through."

Arnor then gathered together a large body of men, and Bolli and he rode down to the Thing. The two brothers, Thord and Thorvald, brought a very large body of followers to the Hegranes Thing. They had heard of Bolli's coming. They meant to block the prosecution. And when the folks were come together at the Thing Bolli put forward the charges against Thorolf. And when the defense was called, Thorvald and Starri came up with all

their following and aimed to have the charge disallowed by force and browbeating. But when Arnor saw what was doing he drove in between the two parties with his following and told them, "This is plain, that it will not do to get all these good men into such a mess of trouble as is in sight here; and all of it just to stop the folks from getting their rights. It will not do to back up Thorvald in this business. And you, too, Thorvald, will want plenty of help if you are going to put it to the test." Now Thorvald and Starri could see that the case would go through, for they did not have force enough to make head against Arnor and his company, and they stood aside. Bolli outlawed Thorolf the Pilot there at the Hegranes Thing for the killing of his kinsman Olaf, and with that he went back home. Arnor and he parted with much affection. Bolli sat at home.

LXXXII. Of the killing of Thorolf the Pilot.

THERE was a man by the name of Thorgrim. He was the owner of a ship laid up on shore in the Hrutafjord. To him rode Starri, and Thorolf along with him. Starri spoke to the shipmaster and said, "Here is a man that I would like you to take charge of and give him passage out of the country; and here are three marks of silver which you shall have, and with it goes my goodwill." Thorgrim replied, "I have my doubts about all this, how it will all fall out. But because you insist on it I will take him in. But I will say that he does not strike me as one who brings luck with him." So Thorolf joined the traders, while Starri rode back home when this was done.

Now it is to be said of Bolli that he calls to mind his business with Thorolf, and that it will not have been done to a finish if Thorolf is to get away. He had heard that he had taken passage. Bolli set out from home. He set a helmet on his head, with a shield on his flank, a lance in his hand, and girt with the sword Fotbit. He rode up north to the Hrutafjord and got there about the time the traders were all ready to sail. The wind had come up, too. And just as Bolli rode up to the door of the booth Thorolf came out of it with his luggage in his arms. Bolli drew Fotbit and ran the sword through his body. Thorolf fell on his back in through the doorway and Bolli jumped on his horse. The traders got together and made for him. Bolli told them, "You had

best let be and keep still. You will find it much too hard work to lay me out. And may be I will trim off one or both of you before I am down." Thorgrim said, "I believe that is the truth." So they let be, and Bolli rode back home, and he got great renown from this adventure. He got great praise for it, and it was considered a brave deed. He had outlawed a man outside of his own Quarter, and had then ridden single-handed into the hands of his enemies and killed him there.

LXXXIII. Bolli Bollason rides out on a visit into the North.

The following summer at the Althing Bolli and Gudmund the Mighty came together and had much to say to each other. Gudmund said to him, "Let me tell you, Bolli, that I want to be friends with such a man as you are. I am going to invite you up north to my place for a fortnight's visiting, and I think you will do well to come." Bolli replied that of course he would accept such an honor at the hands of such a man, and promised to come. Then there were others too who came up to show their goodwill in the same way. Arnor Kerlingarnef invited Bolli to a feast at Miklibæ. There was a certain man named Thorstein. He was living at Hals. He was the son of Hellu-Narfi (Narfi the Caveman). He invited Bolli to visit him on his way home out of the North. And Thord of Marbæli invited Bolli. The folks went their way from the Thing and Bolli rode home.

That summer there came a ship into Dögurdarnes and was beached there. Bolli gave lodgings to twelve of the traders at Tunga and they spent the winter there, and he entertained them in lordly style. They stayed quietly at home over Christmas. But after Christmas it was Bolli's intention to go visiting into the north, and he then had horses shod and got ready to go. There were eighteen of them riding in company. The traders were all armed. Bolli rode in a blue cape and carried a lance in his hand, a good gift from the king. So they rode northward and

came to Thord's place at Marbæli. There they were very well received, and there they sat in great content.

From there they rode on to Miklibæ, to Arnor, and he welcomed them in great style. They had a great feast in that place. Then Arnor said to them, "You have done well, Bolli, to make me this visit. To my mind you have shown me great goodwill in so doing. And you will leave no better gifts behind with me than what you will get of me. And my friendship shall be yours to command. But I have my doubts that not everybody in these parts is well disposed toward you. There are those who think they have lost prestige. I have in mind especially the Hjaltasons. Now I am going with you as far as the Heljardal (Hell Valley) Moors when you leave here." Bolli answered him, "I thank you, Arnor, my good man, for all the honor you have shown me now and in the past. And to my mind our company will be the better off for your riding with us. We have had a mind to go about this countryside in the most peaceable fashion; but if anyone should set on us then it may be that we will play the game and follow their lead." Arnor joined their company and so they rode on their way.

LXXXIV. Of the quarrel with Helgi of Skeid.

Now there is to be told of Thorvald that he spoke to his brother Thord and said, "Doubtless you know that Bolli is coming this way a-visiting. Just now they are at Arnor's, eighteen of them in company, and they are coming north over the Heljardal Moors." "I know it," said Thord. Thorvald went on to say, "Still it is not to my liking to have Bolli dodging around the corner by us, without our coming in touch with him. I know of no one who has done more to damage my good name than he." Thord told him, "You are a good deal of a meddler, a great deal more than I like. And all this would never have come up if I had had my way. I am not sure that Bolli is not ready for us." "I am not going to be stopped," said Thorvald, "but it is for you to go your own way." Thord replied, "I am not to be left behind if you are going, my brother; but all the honors that we get from this venture are to go to you; and so also if it turns the other way about."

Thorvald gathered men about him until they were a company of eighteen who rode out on the way ahead of Bolli to lie in wait for them. Arnor and Bolli then came riding on with their men, and when presently there was but a little way between them and the Hjaltasons, then Bolli turned to Arnor and said, "Is it not time for you to turn back now? You have already escorted us manfully as it is. The Hjaltasons are not likely to sneak

up on me." Arnor replied, "I am not turning back just yet. For it is just as if some one were telling me that Thorvald has set his mind on meeting you. But what is it I see coming up ahead? Is it not the flash of shields? and there are the Hjaltasons, no doubt. And still, the whole thing could perhaps be arranged in such a way that they would come in for no honors in this adventure and yet so as to convict them of having plotted against your life." By this time the two brothers and their men were able to see that Bolli's company was no smaller than their own, and they were beginning to think it would be all the worse for them if they attempted any open mischief. They found it advisable to turn back home, inasmuch as they saw no way to get what they wanted. Then Thord spoke up, "Now this thing has turned out very much as I was afraid it would. This whole adventure has turned into a disgrace. And I still think we had done better to stay at home. We have only managed to show malice and have got nothing done." Bolli's company rode on their way. Arnor went with them up on to the moorland, and did not leave them until where the road began to go down toward the north. Then he turned back and they rode on down the Svarfadardal and came to the farmstead called Skeid.

At this place there lived a man named Helgi. He was of humble birth, ill-tempered, and well-to-do. He had a wife by the name of Sigrid. She was some relation of Thorstein's, the son of Hellu-Narfi. She was the better man of the two. Bolli's riders found themselves next to a hay-yard, and they dismounted and fed hay to their horses, rather sparingly, and all the while Bolli held them back from taking the hay. "I am not sure," said he, "what the temper of this farmer may be." However, they fed an armful of hay to their horses and let them bait. Up at the farmhouse a man came out, and went right back in again and said, "There are some men at your hay-

yard, master, and they are pulling at the hay-stacks." Sigrid the housewife replied, "They are likely to be people with whom it will be just as well not to be too sparing of the hay." But Helgi jumped up in a fury and declared he was not going to have anyone stealing his hay. He ran out in a hurry as if he were out of his senses and got to where they were baiting their horses.

Bolli stood up when he saw the man coming and stood leaning on his lance, the king's-gift, when Helgi ran up to him and called out, "Who are these thieves that are breaking in and stealing my property, and are pulling down my hay-stacks to feed their beasts?" Bolli told him his name. Helgi told him, "It is an ugly name and I guess you are no honest man." "That may all be so," said Bolli, "but I will deal honestly with you anyway," and Bolli pushed their horses back and told the men to feed them nothing more. Helgi went on to say, "I reckon that you have stolen what you have already taken, and that means outlawry for you." "I take it, my good man," said Bolli, "that you will let us pay our way out of it and not bring suit for outlawry. I am willing to pay you twice the value of your hay." "Not likely," said Helgi, "but I will have something more to say about it before you go." Then Bolli asked him, "Is there anything, my good man, that you are willing to accept, and let us go in peace?" "I think," said Helgi, "that maybe I will take that gold-worked lance that you are carrying." "I am not sure," said Bolli, "that I would care to let it go. I had counted on something else to do with it. And you should be careful about asking me to give up the weapons I am carrying. Better choose something else, valuable enough so that you will be quite content with it." "Not by any means," said Helgi. "And anyway it is the best way to let you answer for what you have done." Then Helgi began a legal summons and cited Bolli for theft and laid the penalty at full outlawry.

Bolli stood still and listened to him and grinned at the little fellow. And when Helgi had done his summons he asked, "When did you leave home?" Bolli told him. Then said the farmer, "In that case I charge you with having lived at others' costs for more than a fortnight." And Helgi began a second summons and cited Bolli for vagrancy. And when that was done, Bolli told him, "You are taking great pains, Helgi. And it may be just as well to play your own game with you." Then Bolli began a summons and cited Helgi for slander, and a second summons for unlawful attempt on his property. His companions were for killing the rogue out of hand, but Bolli said that would not do. Bolli laid the penalty at full outlawry. He told them, "You are to give Helgi's wife a knife and belt which I am giving her, for I am told that she has wished us nothing but well in all this." So Bolli rode away and Helgi stayed behind. Bolli's company went on to Thorstein's at the Hals, where they were made welcome. A splendid banquet was made for them there.

LXXXV. Of Bolli's rupture with Thorstein Narfason.

Now it is to be told of Helgi that he got back to the house at Skeid and told his wife about the doings between himself and Bolli. "Now I scarcely know," said he, "what I had better do with such a man as this Bolli. I am no hand at lawsuits, and I have not many friends who could help me out in case of a lawsuit." Sigrid the housewife replied, "You have been making a great fool of yourself. You have had to do with some of the best people and have behaved like a marvel. And you are likely to get all you deserve too. You are likely to forfeit all you have, and yourself into the bargain." Helgi listened to what she was saying and he did not like it; and yet he had a notion that it might be the truth, for it was his fortune to be a poor-spirited fellow and yet to be ill-tempered and foolish. He could see no way of setting himself right, but he knew that he had talked himself into a scrape. Taking it all together, he was feeling quite desperate.

Sigrid called for a horse and rode out to see her cousin Thorstein Narfason; and by that time Bolli and his company were already there. She took Thorstein to one side and told him the state of the case. "But that is a piece of bad luck!" said Thorstein. She told him, too, what a reasonable offer Bolli had made and how foolishly Helgi had behaved, and she begged Thorstein to do all he could to straighten the matter out. Then she went home, and Thorstein had a talk with Bolli. "What is up,

my friend?" said he, "Has Helgi of Skeid been playing the fool with you? I am going to beg you to let the matter drop, for my sake, and pay no attention to it. For here the saying applies, that 'futile is a fool's talk.'" Bolli answered him, "It is quite true that all this is of no account, nor am I going to let it bother me." "Then I will ask you," said Thorstein, "to overlook his offense for my sake, and you shall have me for a friend for it." "No trouble will come to anyone from this affair, and I have not let it trouble me. It can wait till next spring." Thorstein replied, "I will make it plain that it means something to me to have this matter arranged in the way I would like it. I will make you a present of a stallion, the best there is to be had in this countryside, and with him are eleven mares." Bolli answered him, "Your offer is beyond praise. But you need not make so much of this thing. I make little of it, and little will come of it when it comes into court." "In fact it comes to this," said Thorstein, "that I am willing to handsel you full and free disposal of the matter on your own terms." Bolli answered him, "The fact of the matter is that there is no use of looking any further for a way out, for I am not willing to settle this case out of court." "In that case you are choosing what will be the worse for us all," said Thorstein. "Even if Helgi is of little account, still he is bound to us by ties of friendship. So that we are not likely to give him up to pass under your weapons, seeing that you have no regard for what I am asking. And as for the words which Helgi threw at you in his charges, I see no increase of infamy in bringing all that into court." Thorstein and Bolli parted rather coldly. He rode away with his following, and it is not mentioned that they were taken leave of with gifts.

LXXXVI. Bolli Bollason at Mödruvellir.

Bolli and his company went on to Mödruvellir, to Gudmund the Mighty. He came to meet them on the way, with great courtesy, and was very much pleased. There they sat for a fortnight in great comfort and content. Then Gudmund spoke to Bolli and said, "What is it that has happened? has some dispute come up between Thorstein and you?" Bolli said there was not much to it, and shifted the talk to something else. Gudmund asked him, "What road are you taking on your way home?" "The same," said Bolli. Gudmund then told him, "I would advise you against that. I am told that Thorstein and you parted in some hard feeling. Rather stay here with me and ride down south in the spring and we will then let this quarrel come to a head." But Bolli said he was not going to put off his going just for their blustering talk. "And it came into my mind, too, when the fool Helgi was ranting away at his craziest and heaped one insult on another, and was going to take my lance, the gift of the king, out of my hands in payment for an armful of hay, that I would try to give him what was coming to him for his talk. Also, I had another use for the lance. I have been thinking I would rather make you a present of it, and along with it the gold ring which the king of Byzantium gave me. To my mind these articles will now be in better hands than if Helgi had them." Gudmund thanked him for these gifts and said, "The

return gifts for these will be less than they deserve." Gudmund gave Bolli a gold-plated shield and a gold ring and a mantle, and the mantle was made of the costliest stuff and was covered with embroidery in every part that would look the better for it. All these presents were very choice. Then said Gudmund, "I think you are making a mistake, Bolli, to ride by way of Svarfadardal." Bolli said that no harm was likely to come of it. So they rode away, and Bolli and Gudmund parted as the very closest of friends.

Bolli and his company then rode away outward by way of Galmarstrand. By nightfall they came to the farm known by the name of The Crosses. Here lived a man by the name of Ottar. He was standing out-of-doors. He was bald and was clad in a leather jacket. Ottar greated them kindly and asked them to stop overnight, and so they did. They were well served and the goodman was quite merry with them, and there they stayed overnight. In the morning when Bolli and his men were ready to go on, Ottar said, "It has been very kind of you, Bolli, to have made me this visit, and I wish to show you some little mark of my regard; to give you a gold ring, and I shall be thankful to have you take it. And here is also a gold finger-ring that goes with it." Bolli took the gifts and thanked the goodman. Then Ottar got on his horse and rode out ahead to show them the way, because a light snow had fallen during the night. So they rode on their way down to Svarfadardal, and when they had been riding a little while Ottar turned and spoke to Bolli, "I want to show you that I wish you to be my friend. Here is another gold ring which I wish to give you. And I wish you well in every way that I can. And indeed you are likely to need it." Bolli replied that the goodman was doing him too much honor; "and yet I will accept the ring." "That is quite right," said the goodman.

LXXXVII. Of the fight at the river.

Now there is to tell about Thorstein of Hals. So soon as he thought it likely that Bolli would be riding south again he gathered a force of men and arranged to lie in wait for Bolli. He meant to bring relations between Helgi and Bolli to a conclusion. Thorstein had a company of thirty men and rode out to the Svarfadardal river with them and made a halt there.

There was a man named Ljot, who lived at Vellir in the Svarfadardal. He was a great chieftain, with a large following and much given to litigation. It was his habit for everyday to wear a black doublet and to carry a hanger; but if he was looking for a fight, then he wore a blue doublet and carried an axe with a long curved blade. He was then rather grim looking.

Now Bolli was riding down along Svarfadardal with his company and Ottar kept them company down past the farmstead at Hals and down to the river. There was Thorstein waiting for them with his men, and as son as Ottar saw them he turned short and rode off and away at a run. Thorstein and Bolli were then one on either side of the river. There was open water along the riverbanks but the ice was afloat along the middle. Thorstein's party ran out on the ice. Helgi of Skeid, too, was along and he egged them on strongly and declared it was quite right and good for them to try conclusions with Bolli now and show him whether his bluff and bluster would carry it off, and whether there were any men in

the North country who dared to stand up to him. "And there is no use of sparing them now. Kill them, every one of them. That is what will make others of their kind tired of bothering us." Bolli heard what Helgi was saying and saw him out on the ice. Bolli shot his spear at him and hit him in the middle. He fell dead back in the river and the spear went through and stuck fast in the bank, and Helgi was left hanging in the water. Then there set in a very sharp fight. Bolli pushed on so hard that they all fell back who got in his way. Then Thorstein came on against Bolli and as soon as they met Bolli gave Thorstein a blow with his sword across the shoulder and gave him a great wound. Thorstein was also wounded in the leg. The onset was very hot. Bolli too was hurt, though not seriously.

Now it is to be told of Ottar that he rode off upstream to Vellir, to Ljot's place, and as soon as they met Ottar told him, "This is no time to be sitting still, Ljot," said he. "Follow up the honor that lies ready to your hand." "What is all this, Ottar?" "I guess they are fighting down by the river, Thorstein of Hals and Bolli. And it will be a great piece of good luck to stop the mischief between them." Ljot told him, "You often show yourself to be a good deal of a man." Ljot was soon ready and set off with a few men, and Ottar with him. And when they got to the river Bolli and the rest were hard at it, and three men were down on Thorstein's side. Ljot with his men pushed in between them so briskly that they could scarce get at one another. Then Ljot spoke up, "Fall back right away!" said he. "There is already more than enough of this. I am going to settle this quarrel between you all by myself. And if either of you refuses, then I will join in with the other party and drive at you." So now when Ljot went at it so stoutly they let up on the fighting. And both sides agreed to let Ljot settle the quarrel between them. With this they

parted. Thorstein went home and Ljot invited Bolli to come home with him, and Bolli accepted. Bolli's party went with Ljot to Vellir. The place is called Hestanes where they had been fighting. Goodman Ottar did not take leave of Bolli till they got home with Ljot. Bolli gave him magnificent presents at the parting and thanked him much for his help. And Bolli pledged Ottar his friendship. He went back home to The Crosses and stayed quietly at home.

LXXXVIII. Of the settlement between Bolli Bollason and Thorstein Narfason, and of Bolli's return home.

After the fight at Hestanes Bolli went with Ljot home to Vellir with all his men, and Ljot bound up their wounds. And they healed quickly, for good care was given them. And as soon as they were healed of their hurts, then Ljot called together a large number of people to a Thing. Bolli and his company rode down to the Thing. Thorstein and his men came on, too, and when the meeting had come to order Ljot spoke up and said, "I will not delay telling what are the terms which I have settled on in the quarrel between Thorstein of Hals and Bolli. To begin with, Helgi is considered to have fallen unhallowed on account of his libellous and mischievous attack on Bolli. The wounds of Bolli and Thorstein will be offset against each other. But the three men who fell on Thorstein's side, Bolli shall pay for. While for treasonable assault on Bolli and lying in wait for him Thorstein is to pay him fifteen hundred marks, at the rate of three ells.[1] Herewith they shall keep the peace." With this the meeting dissolved. Bolli told Ljot that he was now riding away home and gave him many thanks for his help, and they exchanged handsome gifts and parted good friends.

[1] The payment would be made in homespun (frieze) of staple trade-goods quality and width (18 inches), counting three ells (1½ yards) to the (nominal) ounce of silver.

Bolli took over the property of Sigrid at Skeid, as she wished to go away with him into the West country. They rode on their way till they came to Miklibæ, to Arnor's. He made them exceeding welcome. There they made a short stay, and Bolli told Arnor all about his dealings with the Svarfdal folks and what came of it. Arnor said to him, "Great has been your good luck in all these adventures where you have had to do with men like Thorstein. It is only the plain truth to say that few if any chieftains will have made so bold a visit out of other parts into this North country as you; surely none who have had so many envious enemies." Bolli now rode out of Miklibæ with his men and back home in the south. Arnor and he pledged one another their friendship anew at the parting. And when Bolli now got home to Tunga his housewife Thordis was glad to see him. She had already heard something of their fight with the Northlanders and was anxious about how he had come off. So now Bolli sits at home in peace and much renown. This adventure of Bolli's made talk through all the countryside, and the talk ran all one way about it, that the like had scarcely been done before. His good fame grew greater on this as well as on other accounts. Bolli found a decent marriage for Sigrid and so took leave of her. And we have heard no more of this Saga.

The Story of Gunnar Thidrandabani.

THERE was a certain man by the name of Ketil, nicknamed Thrum. He was the son of a certain Thidrandi and lived in Njardvik. His wife's name was Thorgerd; his sons were Thorkel and Eyolf. With them was a boy, an adopted son named Thidrandi, a Geitisson; the most promising of all the young men in the country of the Eastfjords. There was also a man named Björn, a Korekson, living in Skridudal. He was a substantial farmer; there were several brothers of them. It is related that on a certain summer there had been a horse-fight bespoken. One of the horses was owned by Ketil of Njardvik, the other by Björn of Skridudal. There was a large gathering and good sport. Thidrandi Geitisson was there. The outcome of the horse-fight was that Björn had the better horse. He came round to Thidrandi and said to him, "With you I would like to be friends, and I will make you a present of the horse which I put up to day." Thidrandi thanked him for the gift-horse; "And you shall have my friendship in return." Björn said that so he would have the thing that he wanted. There was a man at this gathering who was named Thori. He was by-named the England-Farer. He too spoke for friendship with Thidrandi. He had come out to Iceland the summer before and had been in lodgings with Brodd-Helgi. He was also a great friend of his.

It is also related that this same fall there came to Björn Korekson and his brothers, and looking for a place

to stay, a man who was known by the name of Asbjörn Veghamar; a big man and rather stout, light-haired, ill-eyed, long-necked, and he had been in service with Asgrim Ellidagrimson. "I am now looking for a living," said he, "with men who have use for a good workman." They said they were badly in need of such a thing, and so he took service with the Koreksons. They were well pleased with his work and his behavior. He had been with them nearly three years and had laid something by, and now he wished to leave and asked them to let him have some sort of a place on which to live. The brothers told him he would do better working for a living than if he had to deal with his neighbors on his own account. He rejoined that there was no call for insinuations on that head. They afterward found him a homestead near by and he lived there, in good part at their cost; and his debts kept growing fast, for he was careless about it. Björn then spoke to him, "I had my doubts that farming on your own would not come handy for you, and I would now like you to come back to us and work out your debt." He said his farming had not been tried out yet and asked to let matters stand as they were, and so it was arranged. He bought many things that took his fancy, and whenever Thori Englandsfari came into those parts Asbjörn would go to him and bargain for goods with him. Thori told him, "I am told that you have not much to pay with." Asbjörn replied, "I am not counted worth much, but I make quite a little by work and thrift." Thori agreed to sell him the goods, and when Thori got back to Brodd-helgi he asked about his sales. He told him what he had been doing.

Helgi then told them, "In that case you have been selling goods to a man I don't like and who is not to be trusted." And next summer they set about collecting on their sales and went to see Asbjörn Veghamar and asked him for what he owed. He replied that he did not know what

was to be done about payments of that sort, and they got nothing of him. At the same time the Koreksons were missing him in their work. And when Asbjörn saw that it would no longer do to sit still about it he ran away and came down into Njardvik, went to Ketil, and asked him to take him in. "I will suit you, for I am a good workman and you are something of a driver yourself. And I did not get along well with the Koreksons." Ketil said he had no great mind to take him in. "Just give me a trial, Master," said he. "It would be awkward to make enemies of the folks for your sake." "There is no great mischief likely to come of it," said Asbjörn. The upshot of it was that Ketil took him in and set him to work. And when the Koreksons heard of it they came to Ketil in Njardvik and told him that they would now shift all of Asbjörn's liabilities to him and declared that they were losing heavily on him. Ketil said they were probably in the right, "but I am not going to make any payments on his account, but I shall not hinder their coming on with a few men to sue him." Thidrandi broke in to say, "This has a strange sound, Foster-father. And it will be more than is to be expected if all this ends well." Ketil told him, "You are backing up this claim pretty strongly. Likely you are thinking of the gift-horse." Thidrandi said he was only speaking for what would best serve Ketil's own good. With this they rode away. And Thidrandi then went up north into Krossavik, and in the summer, at a meeting where the folks had gathered, the Koreksons were saying that they meant to run down to Njardvik and serve a summons on Asbjörn, in case Thidrandi were going that way to visit his folks. If so it was likely that Ljot would also go with them.

This summer there came a ship into Breidavik. The place is between Husavik and Borgarfjord (east). There were two shipmasters, Gunnar and Thormod. The folks round about traded with them, and they were looking to

stay over in this place. Ketil rode down to the ship and made terms with the shipmasters, and they took lodgings with him. Gunnar was an unusually fine-looking man, big and strong, and strikingly handsome. Thidrandi came on a visit to the Koreksons during the summer and they made him very welcome and he stayed overnight. They begged to be made his men, to follow and serve him in all things. He came in on this with them. Then presently they proposed going down into Njardvik with him to sue Asbjörn. Thidrandi agreed to do so. Old man Korek then spoke up and said, "I do not feel easy in my mind about this business, my sons; and you are putting a good man to some risk in it. And you have to do with a hot-headed fellow in this Ketil, and the other fellow is a bad one."

There were three of the Koreksons: Björn, Thorfin, and Haldor. With Thidrandi was Thori Englandsfari and two others who are not named. There were seven of them altogether. They went on until they got into the woods a little way from the houses in Njardvik. There they got down and presently took to playing and shooting twigs at one another in sport. Thidrandi then told them, "I am thinking that my foster-father will think we are a pretty large company and he may get ugly about it." Asbjörn Veghamar saw all this; he was at work digging peat in a bog near by. He saw who they were and thought he knew what their errand was. He threw down his tools and made a run for the house. One of the brothers shot a twig-javelin at him and hit Asbjörn in the belly. He ran on none the slower for that. Thidrandi said that had better been undone. Asbjörn ran on home and came stumbling into the house. Ketil was toasting himself by the fire; and he asked him what he was in such a hurry about. He replied, "Fighting fools are safest known by hearsay. You call yourself a stout man and you are doing nothing to avenge me when I have

a spear-head sticking through the middle of me." Thidrandi and his company were slower about it. They could not ride their horses the short way across the bogs. Thidrandi told them he had his doubts about what Asbjörn would be saying for them. Ketil was toasting himself by the fire, and it seemed to him that he was getting no heat from it; which he declared was very queer. Asbjörn called on him for revenge, if he were any kind of a man. Ketil suddenly flared up in a passion and got a hold of a spear. Thidrandi and the rest were then coming into the yard. Thidrandi told his men to do no violence to his foster-father. Ketil made at Björn Korekson and ran him through the body with the spear, he being the nearest to him of them. And when Thori Englandsfari saw this he jumped at Ketil and drove an axe into his chest, which killed him on the spot. And then Thori too was killed by one of Ketil's farmhands. There was a man named Thorgeir and another Thori Bring. They were farmhands of Ketil's and were both killed.

By this time Thidrandi was turning to ride away, and his men with him, five of them now. One of the maids on the place ran into the house and told all this to Gunnar and Thormod, who knew nothing of these things that had happened so all at once. She told them, "You are a queer lot. You sit here while the man of the house is being killed outside, and his men too. You are good for nothing at all." Gunnar told her she talked too much. "Just tell me which one of the lot would be the worst loss." "That would be Thidrandi," said the wretched woman. "We will have got something for our man if you kill him." Gunnar made a cast with a spear into the crowd of them and struck Thidrandi in the back and ran him through the body, and he fell dead off his horse. But Thorgerd the housewife and her sons were much put out by what had been done and said it was all a great mistake and a misfortune. They said there were power-

ful men who would follow up this quarrel and that a mighty stir would be made about it. And they pressed hard on the two Norwegians to get away. Thorgerd told them there was no chance for them anywhere, and soon after they were gone and no one knew what had become of them. There was a great lamentation about these things that had taken place, for Thidrandi had very many friends and was much thought of. The tidings went far and wide, and much was made of it.

In a little while Thorkel Geitisson came into Njardvik, and some others with him, to look for the Norwegians and their goods. They said it was only right for both parties to hunt for them and work out their grievance on them. Thorgerd told them it was quite strictly their duty to hunt for them, and that she had driven them off. And with this Thorkel and his men had to go.

So now the winter was passing, and meantime Thorkel came to suspect that Gunnar, who was now called Thidrandabani, and his partner Thormod were likely to be in the keeping of the Ketilsons, Thorkel and Eyolf. So now Thorkel Geitisson spoke to one of his farmhands, Thord by name, and said to him, "I have an errand for you to go down into Njardvik and tell the two brothers that a horse of theirs has been lost out of their stud." Thord replied, "I will run no errand down there unless it is such that no mischief will come to the two brothers from it." He told him, "You will be doing no mischief." So Thord set out down to Njardvik and told the two brothers about the horse. They thanked him for his kindness in doing so, and with this they parted.

After a little Thorkel and his brother Eyolf went up to the corral in which the horses were kept. It was a still day with some snow falling, and dull weather. And when the two brothers were come to the stackyard fence five men came upon them, and that was Thorkel Geitisson. They overpowered the brothers and bound them. Thorkel

called on them to tell where the Norwegians were, and said he knew they were in their keeping. They denied it and said they knew nothing about them. Then Thorkel led them apart, each by himself. He was wearing a fur cloak, and he had his men cut the throat of a calf down by the fence so that the blood ran over Thorkel Ketilson. Then he threw back the cloak and told Eyolf to tell him where the Norwegians were hid, "Or else you will be killed, just like your brother. Here you can see his blood on my cloak." Eyolf said, "All men are greedy of life. I will rather tell than be killed. They are near here in our goatshed, and my brother and I have been in the habit of bringing them food when we have come up to see to the horses." And when Eyolf had told them this, then Thorkel was brought out and he was unhurt. Eyolf told him, "You have played a trick on us this time, Thorkel. And what I should like would be to tell you a tale sometime that will hurt you no less than I was hurt when you told me my brother was dead." Thorkel Geitisson then had the two brothers bound, both hand and foot, and they were left lying by the stackyard fence while he and his fellows went on to the goatshed.

Gunnar was saying, "I have been having an unpleasant dream, Thormod, my boy; and I say, let us get outside and get up into the hills. We are not likely to be left in peace here very long." So they went outside. The snow was falling thick and dark. Then they caught sight of the men, who had already got near the shed. They turned and ran into the driving snowstorm. Thorkel Geitisson made a cast with a spear and struck Thormod through the body. This slowed down his running. He told Gunnar to look out for himself and get away. Gunnar said he was not used to running away from his partners. Thormod told him, "Look here, partner. The spear has gone through me and I shall soon be dead." Then Gunnar saw that he was dying, and he made off. Suddenly the

weather cleared, and as soon as Thorkel got to Thormod he struck him dead; and this hindered the chase, because they crowded about the dead man.

Gunnar got away and came to the farmstead called Bakki, in Borgarfjord. On this place lived a man by the name of Sveinki, a hard-handed, quarrelsome fellow, hard to get on with. He was outdoors, and they passed the greetings of the day. Gunnar said to him, "I will be needing your help right soon, my friend, for Thorkel Geitisson is on the way here with four more, and they are chasing me for my life and have already killed my partner." He answered, "You and I have not had much to do with each other before. And just now you are in a scrape. But you have proved yourself to be a man before this, and have taken revenge for the killing of your house-master, who was a friend of ours. Now I shall be able to afford you little security for any lengthy stay, when men like Thorkel are in pursuit. To begin with, come into the porch." And so he did. There Sveinki covered him over with peat which had been stacked up in the entry.

Presently Thorkel and his men came to the place and met Sveinki outdoors and asked him if Gunnar had come there, "And we want you," said Thorkel, "to hand him over; and so we shall be friends." Sveinki told them he was not to be found there, unless it was that he had gone indoors. "Now, you are welcome to search for him here; though I have never had my house ransacked by any man before, nor have I ever been run over in this fashion." They went on into the house. Then Sveinki talked to the man who kept watch at the door. He was one of Thorkel's company. "I shall be here," said he, "and see that your man will not get out. You can go inside." So this fellow went on in. Sveinki then told Gunnar to get up and come outside, and then he put a bar across the door.

Then Sveinki told him, "Now let us go down to a boat which I have lying on the beach," and so they did. The boat lay there turned bottom up. It was a small vessel which he had lately had tarred. "Here you are to get in under the boat, and you will have to be quick about it." Sveinki then drove a flock of sheep down along their trail to the beach so that the footprints of two men would not be seen. Gunnar got under the boat.

Now it is to be said for Thorkel that he and his men came out of the living-room and found themselves barred in. Still they got out, though rather late. And by the time they got out Sveinki had got back into the yard after driving his flock of sheep up again from the beach. Thorkel told him, "You are holding out on us. What have you done with Gunnar?" "About Gunnar I have nothing to tell you," said Sveinki. "But it is not much to be wondered at if I play you some small trick in return for such an outrage." "Now we are going down to the sea," said Thorkel. "You might as well," said Sveinki. So they came to the boat, where it lay overturned. Thorkel remarked, "That would be a hiding-place; to get under the boat." Sveinki told him, "I am in the habit of stowing my tackle under the boat. Why not one of you get in under and search the place? Or I will go if none of you dares." So he went in under the boat. And just then Thorkel thrust a spear up under the hollow of the boat and wounded Gunnar in the thigh. And when Sveinki saw what had happened he got out his knife and stuck it in his own thigh and made a turn with the knife to make it look like a spear thrust, and when he got out again he told them, "I don't think you have been at all polite to me in this business. And if the odds were even you should not get off without paying for it all." Thorkel replied, "I did not mean to hurt you. But we are quite well aware of who is doing the dodging."

Back they went to the house and ransacked it once more, and then went away. Then Sveinki spoke to Gunnar, "Now we will have to move." Then he took him to a hayloft by the stable, pulled hay out of the mow and made a hollow place in which he stowed him as nicely as might be. Thorkel turned back again and came to the hayloft. Sveinki was puttering about the place and asked them how they were getting on with their business, and if they had nothing to do but rummaging. Thorkel replied that he did not know what trickery he was up to; but added that he had no mind to lay him out without further proofs. Sveinki told him, "It is quite likely that you could kill me; but that would be over-hasty and thoughtless. And then, I will be likely to get at least one man on account before I am laid out." After that they left.

Sveinki then told Gunnar, "Once more we are to go down the cattle trail to the sea." And when they got there Sveinki went on to say, "There is a reef, a low island lying out a ways here from the land, as you see. It is a long swim, and it will be a hard pull for you when you are wounded. I would like you to swim out there if you are fit, and I will come out and look for you as soon as it can be done without risk." Gunnar told him, "You are very kind. And all this will be more than I can pay you for. I will try for it, even if it had been farther." Then he laid out for the holm, with all his arms and armor; and he made it all right, though it made him very tired and numb. So he lay down and dug himself into the drift of seaweed to keep out the cold.

So soon as Sveinki was sure he could do it without risk to Gunnar he rowed out to the island, found Gunnar, and said it was high time to help him out. By this time he was scarce able to walk. Sveinki then carried him home and he stayed there for a few days in hiding. Then

Sveinki told him, "Now it will not do for you to stay here any length of time, for I am not strong enough to hold you in the long run. I am going to send you to Helgi Asbjarnarson, who is a friend of mine. You had best get there in the nighttime. Go to the house in which Helgi sleeps. And it is the custom for those who are looking for him to take them in, to knock at the door, and he will come to the door himself. It has happened more than once." Sveinki then showed Gunnar the way, and with that they parted.

Gunnar came to Mjoanes in time. Gunnar knocked at the door of the house where Helgi slept. He woke up and remarked, "This fellow seems to need shelter." Helgi then went outside, and they greeted each other. Gunnar told him all the state of the case and gave him the tokens and message from Sveinki. He said, "No one is lost who has Sveinki's help. Now I will take you in, because I owe Sveinki many a good turn. Come into my storehouse." And Gunnar stayed there through the winter well taken care of. The following spring Helgi left home on some business that took him down into the Fjord country. Before he left home he told his wife Thordis, "It so happens," said he, "that all the goodwill and affection there is between us will depend on how you manage about Gunnar for me while I am away." She replied that the test would show.

It is related that on a certain evening twelve men came to the house in Mjoanes. The housewife went outside and all the men on the place with her, and found it was her brother Bjarni Broddhelgason that had come. She asked him to come in and stay overnight. "You are very kind to ask me," said he, "but this is my errand, that I have come here to look for Gunnar Thidrandabani, who killed our kinsman and foster-brother. He is here in an outdoor storehouse and I mean to break it open if you

do not open it." Thordis told him, "Don't go about it like that, brother; and you will still get your errand done. Stay overnight, brother. That is the decent thing to do. Thidrandi was so dear to me that I should like it all the better the sooner Gunnar were killed; and my husband Helgi has been very careful about it all with me this winter, because he knew I would like to see Gunnar dead. And now we will see to it before you leave." So Bjarni and his men got down off their horses and stayed there overnight. Meantime Thordis sent out two men round about to the neighbors and called in men to come to her, so that there were forty men gathered there by morning. Bjarni got into his clothes and then he said, "Now hand over Gunnar, my sister." She told him, "I don't know why you come to call on your sister in this fashion, or why you should wish her such a misfortune as to have me hand out to you, under your weapons, the man that my husband has turned over to me for safekeeping. I shall not do this thing for you. And you will not lay hands on Gunnar this time unless you go all the way." Bjarni replied, "So you have been cheating us? And you seem to have been telling us something else yesterday, my sister, than what you meant to do."

Bjarni rode away. Thordis then went to the storehouse where Gunnar was staying and asked him, "How would you like to be turned over to Bjarni?" Gunnar answered, "There would be no question of that if Helgi were at home." She told him, "There will be no question of it anyway." He thanked her. Presently Helgi came home and all this was told him. He remarked, "I knew that I had a good wife, and I am glad she has shown herself to be her father's daughter."

Gunnar stayed over the summer with Helgi and he was outlawed that summer at the Thing, and it was Thorkel Geitisson who prosecuted him. It was at this time that

the difficulties arose between Helgi Asbjarnarson and Grim Droplaugarson, in the course of which Helgi was killed. Thordis then sent Gunnar into the West country to Helgafell, to Gudrun Osvifsdaughter for succor and safekeeping; so that she parted with him right fairly and Gudrun received him kindly. This was about the time when Gudrun was pledged to Thorkel Eyolfson.

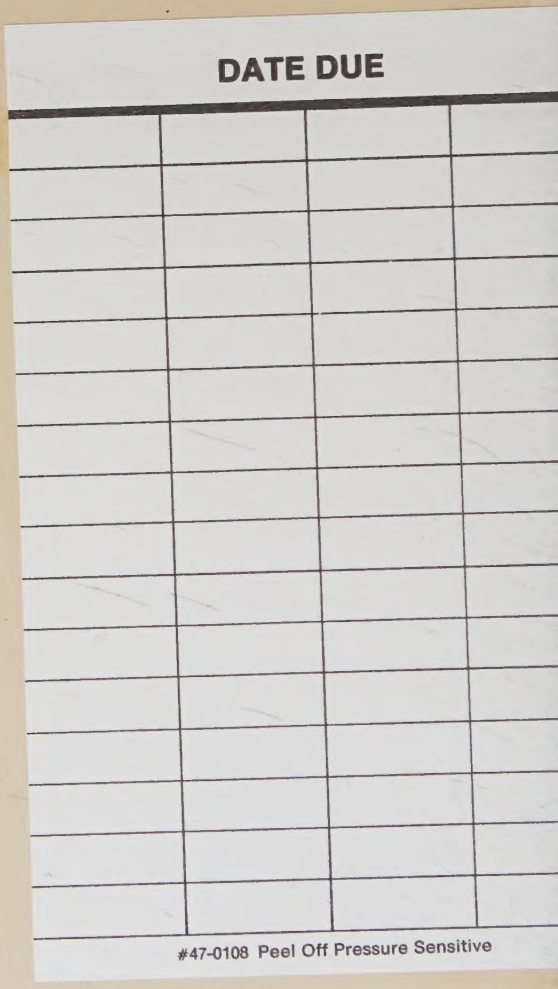
During that same summer Thorkel Geitisson rode down into Njardvik to take up the outlawed property belonging to Gunnar. "It is believed," said Eyolf, "that his property is considerable, but all of it is outside of Iceland; and you will not get a penny of it." Thorkel saw that this was the truth, and presently rode away.

Now there is something to be told of Thorkel Eyolfson, when he came to his wedding at Helgafell. There were many guests gathered there. In the evening, when the folks were washing hands, Gunnar Thidrandabani served the water to Thorkel and the others, wearing a wide, slouching hat on his head. Thorkel thought he knew the man, and asked his name. He gave a name, such as he chose, but not his own. Thorkel called Gudrun in and told her that Gunnar Thidrandabani would have to leave, that they could not both stay. She told him that if so, Thorkel might leave if he chose to, and that she was not so set on getting him for a husband. "Not that I will go so far," said she, "as to turn over any man under your weapons if I choose to hold him." Snorri Godi was there and he was a friend of Gudrun's, and between them they had a force of a hundred men at hand. Thorkel therefore saw that he had best let things rest; and Gudrun and he were duly married.

She sent Gunnar out of the country, in which Snorri Godi abetted her, and sent him away well furnished. Gunnar went abroad and never afterward returned to Iceland. He sent magnificent presents to Gudrun

Osvifsdaughter, together with a message to Sveinki to come away and take all his possessions with him; and so he did. Gunnar received him exceeding well and found him a good home, and he lived in Norway till old age. And herewith we close this story of Gunnar Thidrandabani.

THE END



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